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Ainslee's for March

Marie Van Vorst contributes the complete novel to the March AINSLEE'S. This author of "Coral Strands," "A Man Called Collings," and other novels that have helped establish AINSLEE'S reputation as "the magazine that entertains," has never done a more brilliant piece of work than "The Broken Bell." It is much more than the story of a beautiful American unhappily married to a titled Italian. The outer narrative reflects the inward struggle of a woman whose craving for peace and happiness is tempered by a strong New England conscience.

Even without this remarkable novel the March number of AINSLEE'S would be a noteworthy one. Marion Hill, the author of "Georgette," contributes one of her delicious bits of "written champagne." "At a Mile a Minute" is its label. In Margaretta Tuttle's next story, "In Time of Need," the archbishop, first introduced in the Nadine Carson series, plays his part in developing a strong situation. The stage story for March, "The Man Who Would Be Obeyed," is at once dramatic, artistic and charming. It is by Virginia Kline. Gerald Villiers-Stuart, who wrote the complete novelette in this number, has given us a powerful little tale called "The Jester" for March. Samuel Gordon, Nalbro Bartley, F. Berkeley Smith, Frank Condon and George Hyde Preston all contribute stories of the sort that has commended itself to AINSLEE'S readers in the past.

Two writers, whose work in other magazines has been attracting considerable attention, make their first appearance in AINSLEE'S in this coming number. Thomas P. Byron contributes "Aladdin of the Rio Bravo," in which a bit of good luck and the fact that the hero is Irish save a delightful romance from becoming something less pleasant. It is a tale that will make AINSLEE'S friends glad that we have arranged for more of Mr. Byron's stories.

In "Beauty" Wells Hastings sets down a remarkable tale that might never have been told had not the stripes on an amateur botanist's gypsy wagon been painted lavender instead of cherry-red as ordered.

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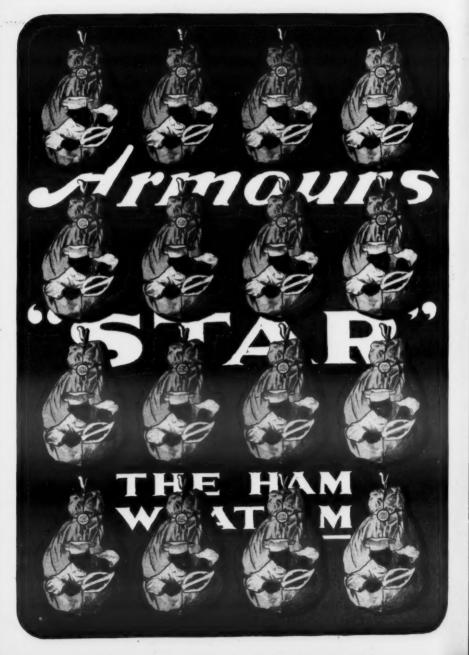
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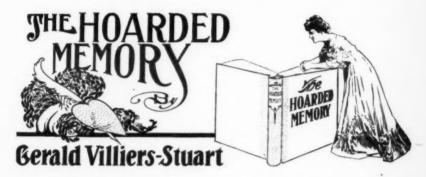


AINSLEE'S

VOL. XXIX.

FEBRUARY, 1912.

No. 1.



CHAPTER I.



OW does a man get to know a woman?"

John Kenniston put the question to Lady Derrismore, and suspended his paddle in the glittering sunshine while he awaited

her answer.

"He doesn't, John," Lady Derrismore drawled the answer in a soft, mocking voice, looking up lazily from the cushions of the canoe. It shot forward with the velocity of a motor boat as Kenniston applied his great strength to the paddle. He did not paddle with the pretty precision of the Thames, but with the long, scooping stroke of the Red Indian or the Irish cotman. His lean, weather-beaten face gave him rather the look of the former, but he was saved from being too good-looking by a broken nose.

"Hang it!" he growled, after a few "I expect I mean 'introstrokes.

"Ah, that's different," drawled Lady Derrismore. "You might write to her about her books; being an authoress,

and young, she will answer promptly

and gratefully.'

"By gad, so I will! I have always wanted to, ever since I read 'The Hoarded Memory.' A tenderfoot miner brought it out from England. I read it one night by a camp fire in Arizona, all one night beneath a sea of stars, and before the last star set I knew I must seek out the woman who wrote that book. I thought I even knew what she was like, that I could recognize her if I saw her. Yes, I'll write to her.

"Have you written to her yet?" asked Lady Derrismore of her cousin, about a week later. Something of mockery in her face impelled Kenniston to reply, rather brusquely: "Yes."

"Have you posted any of the letters?" The taunting eyes of his inquisitor looked relentlessly into the man's, irritatingly sure of his answer.

"Hang it, no! I haven't."

He put down his teacup, and strode to the window of Lady Derrismore's flat, and looked down into Victoria Feminine subtleties irritated Street. him.

Lady Derrismore watched his muscular, slightly rounded shoulders through her cigarette smoke.

"They are as expressive as Sarah Bernhardt's," she murmured at last.

"What are you driving at?" His

very tweeds sulked.

"I'm talking about your shoulders. They don't conceal thought. You might as well let me tease you face to face—besides, you're dying to talk about her. I don't flatter myself that you were lured here by any yearning for my so-

ciety or my vile tea."

"If it amuses you to know it," said Kenniston, wheeling round on his cousin, with his hands sunk despairingly deep in his pockets, "I have written to that girl every blessed day since, but I only posted one letter. Luckily it was at the club, and the porter fished it out for me. It's a confoundedly presumptuous thing writing to a girl you don't know."

Lady Derrismore's cynical smile soft-

ened almost to sadness.

"I believe women really are sacred in your dear, old-fashioned eyes," she observed, rather wistfully.

"They are sacred or they're nothing." he answered, and returned to his

chair by the tea table.

"That comes of living on prairies. Or was it mountains? Some Eveless Eden, anyway. How dull it must have

been!"

"It wasn't dull," answered Kenniston gravely, "but it was haunted by the ghosts of the women each man craved. It may sound flowery, Kate, but in those lonely places men create the souls of women; they fake them up the way mediums fake up spirits. Each man calls up his own ideal, and they are all rather alike, and none of them like.—"

"Me," suggested Lady Derrismore, and laughed somewhat mirthlessly. "Own up, now, my ghost never haunted

those male séances.

Kenniston hesitated, and looked at his

cousin rather helplessly.

"Perhaps not as tall as you, Kate," he suggested. "Smaller, more—more helpless, less—I don't know how to put it. Clever, yes, that's it, less clever.

"All the same, I like you, Kate," he went on gravely. "I don't exactly approve of you, and I don't understand you, but, hang it, I can't help liking you. You're a sportswoman!"

Lady Derrismore leaned forward, and laid her slim, nervous hand on her

cousin's arm.

"For that, John, I'll do you a good turn. I'll get to know your baby-faced authoress, and then I'll introduce you. It shall all be done in such a way that your sense of propriety shall not suffer one little scratch."

"Will you, Kate?" exclaimed Kenniston eagerly. "That's awfully good of you. How will you manage it? Do you know any of the bohemian lot?"

"A few, John, only a few. After my divorce, I decided that bohemia was my natural milieu." She laughed, with real amusement. "But I wasn't a success. I discovered this, my dear: the inhabitants of Belgravia pretend to disapprove of me, the inhabitants of bohemia pretend not to. That's the difference."

Kenniston ran his fingers down his broken nose, a habit when he was puz-

zled

"I must seem an awful duffer to you, Kate," he said at length. "I can't keep up with you. But do you think you really could get to know Miss Vaughan?"

"I know a man who knows her. I will throw the girl into your longing arms; you shall let me be godmother to

the first baby."

"Don't talk rubbish." Kenniston flushed. "Can't a man want to know a girl without being suspected of wanting

to marry her?"

"Not men like you, whom women don't interest. You are herded toward us by a relentless instinct, you approach us growling sullenly. If the instinct and the women were all wiped out together you would light an extra pipe, and say: 'Thank the Lord!'

"Nothing of the sort. You talk like this because of the confounded modern fad for analysis. You have crowded together in cities and seen too much of one another; you have taken the world to pieces the way children ruin a toy. and you can't put it together again. A man gets to a time of life when he can afford to start a home for himself; that means a wife. There's a lot of women to choose from, but very few that will do. Even then the one you want may decline the offer; but if she's willing the thing's simple enough. The man puts up the money which he's worked and fought and suffered for—that's his share; the woman does the little things about the house which make all the difference between a shanty and a home, and she has some children—that's her share. That's all there is to it!"

Kenniston threw himself back luxuriously in his chair, as though he had performed his part, and had become an idle spectator of his partner's efforts.

"Yes, that's her share," echoed Lady Derrismore, getting up and going over to her writing table. "But don't tell the authoress; let her find it out for herself. I am going to write to the man who knows her. She is engaged at present in taking the world to pieces, so I don't think she will fall in with your plans. Wait till she tries to put it together again. Then perhaps—"

Lady Derrismore began to write swiftly in a large, straggly hand. Kenniston leaned forward, and watched her eagerly, as though the pen scratches were threads from the shuttle of fate shooting backward and forward between himself and the object of his worship.

Kenniston was the youngest son of a small squire. The depreciation in agriculture had so nearly ruined the family that they were only able to give the boy his passage to America and a couple of hundred pounds with which to make or mar his fortune.

Fortune is a street as long as the world; houses on the right-hand side, a blank wall on the left, and down this street moves a throng which never speaks, because they never see one another. Only when a few from out this company of ghosts have climbed the steps of one of the houses, and are fighting to get hold of the same knocker, do they become aware of each other's existence. Each man knocks in his turn.

long and feverishly trying to attract more attention than his fellow man. Sometimes the door never opens at all; sometimes it opens wide enough to admit one of the throng. A capricious woman's hand appears, and beckons him in.

To each man who is admitted the woman points out an emblazoned text over an inner door: "The days of man's life are threescore years and ten, but it is only the ten which count." That door leads into the treasure chamber.

Beyond the street of the shops are wonderful gardens, the place where dreams come true. The crowd in the street of the shops is only one-tenth the size of the crowd in the main street, but there is no crowd in the gardens at all. Only a few people who have bought exactly what they want in the shops, and have come into the gardens to enjoy themselves. The fever has died out of their eyes, and the strange thing is this: they have not bought many things in the shops, only a few very good things.

These gardens none may describe, for that would be to describe one's dreams—then they would never come true. There is only one orchestra in the gardens, but it plays to every one the tunes they wish for, and all at once. There is only one kind of flower, but for every man it has different colors, different perfumes, whatever has been his dream.

Kenniston had knocked on several doors. His early youth had been spent on a Montana cattle ranch; it was there he had broken his nose while teaching a mustang the superiority of man. There was a time when it looked as though the door of fortune was going to be opened to him, but the Beef Trust formed in Chicago, and the woman behind the curtains did not come to the door.

Kenniston next tried mining in Arizona. He made a little money, but never enough to come home with. At the age of thirty-one he owned exactly a thousand pounds more than the sum he had taken out with him, and some rubber lands in Mexico which came to him by barter. Hardly enough to pay for his broken nose.

Two years later the woman behind

the curtains looked out, and saw him wearily mounting the steps once more. Perhaps he had hardly reached the point where success would no more matter, but she liked something which she saw in his face, and she liked his dreams; so she let him in, and allowed him to sell his rubber lands to a syndicate for a

hundred thousand pounds.

Kenniston was thinking about those last days as he watched Lady Derrismore write to Etherea. After a while Lady Derrismore ceased, writing, and sat in an attitude of thought, her pen suspended in the air. At last she turned round in her chair, biting the end of the quill, and spoke to Kenniston.

"I like that, what you said about the souls of good women," she said, in a softer voice than she had been speak-

ing in.

"What did I say?"

"That the souls of good women are created by strong men in silent places lone, silent places."

"I never said all that," objected Kenniston, frowning. "Couldn't have."

"You said it to me," replied Lady Derrismore, and went on writing for a moment; then she turned round again. "But don't worry, John, I won't tell any one."

CHAPTER II.

Carlieu's studio was near the King's Road: it was built on the ruins of an old country church. Carlieu, who had lived much in the Latin Quarter, had picked up fantastic ideas of decoration. great feature of his studio was a collection of memorial tablets from the old church; these, together with a tombstone, he had caused to be built into the . walls. He said that these links with the past kept him from being too modern, and helped to make him pious. He was well off, and only did such work as took his fancy. Illustrating fantastic books or poems was his favorite line, and he had done two or three things which had made his name known, at any rate, in Paris.

Carlieu's parties were largely an excuse for feeding half-starved girls and thin, struggling geniuses of both sexes. They also served to make his studio an employment bureau; talented youth had sometimes found recognition there as

well as food.

The walls of the studio were of roughly cut stone, into which were let the tablets. The length of the room and the groined ceiling suggested some primitive chapel on a cliff rather than a studio near the King's Road, Chelsea. A large dining room conventionally furnished with surplus things from Gortenagh, his Irish home, opened out of the studio.

A slit-eyed Iapanese servant presided over solid roasts in the dining room, while Carlieu operated three chafing dishes in the studio. Outside of a certain skill in the rearing of Welsh rarebits his cooking was not of the best, but no one had ever had the heart to tell him so, and his harmless vanity went pleasantly onward, giving his guests an excuse to visit the adjoining room.

The first to arrive was a girl who was to recite in Greek and Persian; she was very excited, because the actor-manager of a famous theater was going to be present. Her ivory-white face and the dense black hair falling like curtains about it, coupled with a good figure, had obtained her many offers of walking parts, which she had had the wisdom and the courage to refuse.

"You are nervous, Berenice," said Carlieu sympathetically, as he took her

hand. "That won't do.".

"Yes, it will. I'll pay for it to-morrow, not to-night. Now I want to have my nerves on the surface, where every

one can feel them."

"Good evening, Patsy Carlieu," said Lady Derrismore, coming forward "That is my through the portière. cousin tagging behind. His name is Kenniston.

"Seems to me we've met before," said Carlieu, as the two men shook hands. He looked at Kenniston rather dreamily

through his monocle.

"I don't seem to remember you." "Now I know-by gad!" Carlieu's dark, expressive face lit up with excitement. "I say," he said to Lady Derris-more, "this is Berenice Dane; talk calmly to her; she is agitated. I want to show your cousin a picture of mine."

He walked to a stand in the corner of the studio, and went rapidly through the contents of a portfolio.

"Here it is!" he exclaimed, holding up a black-and-white drawing. "Look at that!"

He thrust it into his guest's hands. Kenniston took it from him with an air of humoring the eccentricity of his host, which he imagined was partly assumed to keep up the artistic pose. Then he started, and nearly dropped the picture.

"Where did you get that?" he asked in a hoarse undertone, and began to examine the black and white.

It depicted a courtroom thronged with excited faces, some bearded, others small and lean, with up-twisted lines, to indicate mustaches. The judge was smoking a cigar, his legs were "cocked up" on a desk, but he was listening none the less intently to a man in a long, badly made frock coat, who was making a speech. This man was very emphatic; his closed right hand had just thumped into the palm of his left. A man sat in the dock, stifling a yawn; he had a broken nose, and was the one occupant of the courtroom who appeared to take no interest in the proceedings.

The clever touch in the picture was the suggestion of conflict among the audience, the atmosphere of hostile camps indicated by the crossing of glances and the expression of leashed violence on the men's faces. Underneath the sketch Carlieu had written: "Who Killed Cock Robin?"

"I didn't get it," replied Carlieu, who had been watching the other man closely. "I made it."

Carlieu looked at his guest, then at

the drawing.
"You haven't changed much," he observed. "Good likeness for a thumbnail sketch, what! But you are easy to catch."

"Did you hear the end of the trial?"
"No, I had to go on next day. Besides, I wanted to think that it turned out all right for you, and it evidently did, as you are here."

"Then your sympathies were with the prisoner?"

"Yes," replied Carlieu, with sincerity. "It struck me, from all I heard, that the killing of Hank Bass was rather a knightly deed, such a one as troubadours used to sing of. But of course I realized that a Montana jury might have taken a different view."

"It was simply a question between public opinion and the power of Hank Bass' friends; that's why the trial bored me so. It had nothing to do with the case—I mean the evidence, and the speeches, and all that. It was a close thing, but the judge's summing up saved me"

"What did he say?"

"He said-as far as I can remember —that when the case began the prisoner didn't stand no more chance with him than a snowball in the inferno, on account of the deceased being a friend of his; but that facts had been brought out during the trial which made him see that he must either dissociate himself from the memory of Hank Bass or quit being a white man. He was only sorry it had been left to a Britisher to save the honor of a Montana lady; that the jury could do what they damned pleased, but he knew what he was going to do if there was any monkey business. Those were almost his identical words -they made quite an impression on my mind at the time.'

"They would—they naturally would."
"Stop trying to sell my cousin pictures," Lady Derrismore called across the studio. "It's not fair. He doesn't know a Corot from a chromo, and he wouldn't even know which was right side up for one of your alleged works of art, Patsy."

"I'm not trying to sell Kenniston a picture; I'm giving him one, if he'll take it. Will you?" he said, handing the drawing to his guest. "I think you ought to have it."

"I envy my cousin," called out Lady Derrismore.

"So do I," said Carlieu. "It's just the sort of thing I'd like to have done myself," he explained to Kenniston; "an experience I would like to have gone through."

"There's blood on one of my hands, Carlieu," objected the other man.

"There's a woman's honor in the other, Kenniston; it makes an effective balance."

"Thanks—then I'll keep the sketch. It's very good of you, Carlieu. Of course, I'm not ashamed of the episode,

but some way in London-"

"Not in the picture, eh?" said Carlieu. "Suit for defamation of character more appropriate, something of that sort. Violence is repugnant. Hello, Waldorfe," he said, rather coldly, as that individual entered. Carlieu did not like him, but his studio was next door.

Kenniston turned away, and began talking to his cousin; he was afraid Carlieu meant to introduce him.

Waldorfe was also an artist; at any rate, he had an artistic temperament, but as he lacked the creative faculty his temperament had been his undoing. He could begin brilliantly; he could hardly ever finish. He had the smattering of a soul, and most of the arts. With a large income he would have been an ornament and a delight to society; probably a good man. He could write verses, put them to music, and sing them most charmingly; he could design you a week-end cottage on the back of an envelope, and very nearly paint your portrait. Several pictures had actually been finished, and sold. Several plays, of which he had written the first act, only to throw them aside, had been worked out by others, and produced. Very witty, he could talk well to people who did not bore him or from whom he Such men make wanted something. good second-rate actors on the stage, very first-rate actors in real life.

Waldorfe was a disciple of a disciple left over from the æsthetic period, but he had somewhat improved on its philosophies by adding to them a little of everything which came along on the crest of the new-thought waves. He had always been a disciple of any one or anything which had ever boasted of a vogue, and for a vogue he had a trained

nose.

He was the hyphen between two generations of destructive philosophies; the wall from which the cries of one school of thought echoed into the ears of the next.

He had a lean, dark, clean-shaven face, and brilliant, haggard eyes.

Just then the door opened, and Etherea Vaughan came forward. Carlieu smiled at her across the room, and he held his finger to his lips.

"Hush!" he said. "Miss Dane is go-

ing to begin.'

Etherea halted. She was within two feet of Kenniston. His steady, impassive glance suddenly changed. He turned eagerly, imploringly to his cousin. She looked at Carlieu with an expressive, whimsical smile, which explained the situation, but he once more put his finger to his lips, and Berenice Dane's wonderful voice stole through the studio.

Etherea Vaughan was the daughter of a clergyman whos? parish was a fishing village on the Welsh coast. At the age of eighteen she had written a novel which proved one of those strange, precocious successes that are such a puzzling annoyance to the literary profession. Then an aunt left her some money out of sheer pride in her niece's fame. Every one said how lucky she was.

The microbe of feminine unrest found a ready home in Etherea's young brain, Ibsen clubs, the right of women to lead their own lives as men lived theirs. made a strong appeal to the pretty little authoress. For she was really quite lovely, painted like the mountains and sea from which she came. As a child they had dyed her hair with gorse from the mountains, but as she grew up it took its tone from the bronze seaweed picked up by the storm, and it rippled like the waves whence it came. Through the curtain of her hair a little golden face looked out with tilted Celtic fea-The blue of the sea was reflected in her eyes, but a little of its sadness had crept in, the sadness of the sea, which sorrows when it is calm for the lives it had wrecked when it was

There was just that touch of pathos

about Etherea's face which makes strong men wish to comfort and protect—and the woman is lucky who makes appeal to strong, simple men. They will give her the things she wants. Joy and sorrow, children and peace, instead of the things she thinks she wants. The wives of strong, simple men are not the women who suffer from nerves.

When Etherea had announced to her parents that she was going to live alone in Chelsea they thought that she was mad. Her mother gave her a soothing draft, and reasoned with her like a delirious patient, for her mother had read none of the books which were fermenting Etherea's brain. She believed firmly that a woman needs the protection of a man.

"You'll fall in love with the wrong man, that's what you'll do," said Mrs.

Vaughan.

"I shan't fall in love at all, mother. I don't believe in marriage. Platonic friendship, such as the Russian students', the intellectual experience, the exchange of soul matter, the clash of brain against brain—that is all I want, and to be in the movement."

"What movement?"

"Just that, mother, the forward movement, changing everything. The Fabian Society, antivaccination, votes for women—'Their right to be independent.'"

"Supposing your great-grandmother had gone to changing everything, and not believed in marrying? Why, there wouldn't have been any of us to upset anything; there wouldn't have been anything to change by now. No good will come of it. Mark my words."

There was a strong will beneath Etherea's soft exterior; she was her own mistress, she had her own money. She took a tiny house in Chelsea, and plunged into the movement with all the

reckless enthusiasm of youth.

Waldorfe was also in the movement; his hungry eyes saw great possibilities in Etherea's devotion to the new causes. He had reached a time of life when, blase and tired, he could act out to perfection Etherea's idea of platonic relations between a man and a woman.

They became great friends, such friends that they shared a common purse, and that purse was Etherea Vaughan's,

Great emotions, imprisoned for centuries like hot sunshine in old wine, crept out of a Greek love poem. Only Berenice Dane knew the actual meaning of the words, but every one in the room thrilled to their disturbing sounds. To every one they brought back the great love moment of their lives, the desire to live it over again. Etherea's eyes sought Waldorfe's across the studio; his brilliant face and tall figure made him easy to pick out of the throng. Kenniston unconsciously moved a little closer to Etherea.

When the Greek poem was finished, the girl on the dais began something in Persian. She gave no chance for applause; her methods were very restrained—you felt that she dare not loose all her forces. But under cover of words she could not have spoken, she portrayed what she wished so vividly that Etherea felt the heat of the walledin seraglio, saw the divan beneath the fretted screen, and smelled strange Eastern smells of some old Persian city.

The applause was faint at first, the little audience had to come out from under the anæsthesia of emotion, but it grew in volume and became vociferous. All eyes were turned upon the manager. He was shaking his head sadly, but he asked Carlieu to introduce him to Bere-

nice Dane.

"She is a great genius," he said, "with no financial value—unless, unless—but I will talk it over with her."

Carlieu left them, and went back to Etherea.

tillerea.

"May I introduce you to Lady Derrismore?" he asked.
"Why not? Which is Lady Derris-

more?"

Carlieu effected the introduction, and returned to hear what Trenholme had

to sav.

"I have always wanted to meet you, Miss Vaughan," said Lady Derrismore, "ever since I read your charming book, 'The Hoarded Something'—I'm bad'at names—such a sweet book. May I introduce my cousin, Mr. Kenniston?

John, this is Miss Vaughan, whose book you are always raving about. I must go and find a chair somewhere."

She disappeared into the dining room, leaving two embarrassed people face to

face.

Etherea's intuition, Lady Derrismore's abrupt exit, the careless greeting after the alleged anxiety to make her acquaintance, coupled with the swift introduction of the man who had stood so near during the recital, made the situation very clear to the girl. She felt a little flattered, a little annoyed. Looking up into Kenniston's rather serious face, she had a feeling that here was a man who might bore her greatly, yet keep her helplessly by his side as long as he chose to converse. Perhaps it was the wave of emotion which had been let loose in the room, perhaps her subconscious self became aware that this man would influence the course of her life.

At any rate, his earnest, resonant voice disturbed her as she heard it say: "This means a great deal to me."

"I did not know that men cared about my books," she answered. "It is delightful to know that they do. People who write are never tired of hearing nice things about their work."

"I was in a mining camp when I read 'The Hoarded Memory.' There were only men at the camp; they all read your book. We were all fascinated by it. We used to wonder what the woman who wrote it was like; every one had his own idea."

Etherea smiled up at him delightedly. She liked the turn the conversation had taken.

"How nice! I wonder what your idea was?"

"I made rather a good guess. My picture was quite like the original."

"You are not disappointed, then? I am not one more illusion gone?"

Kenniston hesitated.

"Of course I am. I should not have asked that," spoke the girl, half in jest, half in earnest.

Before he could reply his host interrupted by asking them all to sit down. "May I sit next you?" asked Kennis-

ton humbly.

"You may," answered Etherea, "though why you should want to sit next a lost illusion——"

"You are not that," said Kenniston earnestly, as he found her a seat.

"A cheery place this of Patsy Carlieu's," said Lady Derrismore, to the actor-manager who sat next to her. "It's a little like a grillroom, and a little like a morgue. Do you suppose it accounts for the lack of laughter among our fellow guests?"

She looked with real curiosity at the earnest young people down the table. The women were rather pale, with intelligent faces. They wore loose garments

of pleasant colors.

Kenniston had remained silent after taking a seat next to Etherea; conversation was not essential to him, his life had been too full of silences. He was conscious of a hostile attitude in the object of his adoration, but Etherea felt a curious sense of restfulness and security in her companion's presence, coupled with a childish desire to say or do something to shock him.

She noted that across and farther up the long table Waldorfe and the Dane girl were getting rather friendly. For the first time in her life she felt the sensation of jealousy, and was left stranded between a desire to shock and snub Kenniston and the necessity of flirting wildly with him, in order to get even

with Waldorfe.

"When you come to think of it," said Etherea at length, "there wasn't much subtlety about your method of getting to know me."

"I'm not subtle," he answered ab-

ruptly.

"Why did you leave out the 'thank the Lord!"?"

"Thank the Lord!" Etherea laughed.

"Your cousin is," said Etherea, looking up to the end of the table, where Lady Derrismore sat between Trenholme and Carlieu. "Doesn't it run in the family?"

"Perhaps she got my share," he sug-

gested.

"Do you think I am subtle?"

"Not for a woman. I go by 'The

Hoarded Memory.' You revealed your-self there—your real self."

"Fancy revealing yourself for ninepence—that was my royalty; or perhaps you only borrowed the book."

"No, I bought it. I had it rebound in

white."

"That was nice of you. But when you find out how horrid I am you'll have the color changed to black."

"You have changed your mind about me since you met me." She looked up into his steady eyes. "Confess!" She was looking very pretty and elfin in her pale-green dress.

"He's not bad-looking," she thought,

"in spite of his broken nose."

"You're playing at being some one else. It's a harmless amusement usually," he added, as an afterthought.

"I'm not! I'm not!" she cried, wondering how she could shock him out of his calm certitude. Then her eyes fell on a memorial tablet let into the oppo-

site wall.

"How would you like to have a tablet like that put up to you?" she asked, and began to read the inscription: "'In memory of William Pettigrew. tablet was erected by his widow. In his relative duties of husband and father this excellent man was surpassed by none, perhaps equaled by few. His unassuming manners and undeviating fidelity procured him the respect and esteem of a numerous family.' That man must have bored his wife terribly. You can read it in every word of that memorial-esteem, respect-excellent man -what adjectives! Not a word about loving him. But how could she, with all those good qualities to contend with?"

"He probably made her happy, in spite of not being a blackguard," said

Kenniston calmly.

His eyes traveled up the table to Waldorfe's vivid, haggard face, which for the moment had lost its mask of the twisty smile.

"How unpleasantly you put things. No nice woman would have anything to

do with a blackguard."

"Women don't always recognize the

brand; it is only on the stage that the villain is labeled."

"You mean to say I wouldn't know a villain when I met him?"

"Other women's villains, perhaps."
"I wish I could meet one," sighed Etherea. "It would be such fun."

Lady Derrismore's words drifted into his mind: "She is busy taking the world to pieces. Wait till she begins to put it

together again."

"Promise me something," he said earnestly. "Remember that, though I have only met you to-night, I have known you for four years. Promise me that, if ever you do meet a villain, and you like him less than you expected, and you find him a little difficult to deal with—they are, you know—that you'll let me help you."

Etherea laughed rather mirthlessly; something of the feeling that this man stood on the shadow of her life was re-

enforced by his words.

"How silly! As if I couldn't look after myself!"

"Promise!"

"Why do you care? You'd have forgotten me by then. I haven't really time for real villains, or even real heroes. I'm a busy bee, making literary honey every shining hour."

She was determined to laugh away this man's disquieting earnestness.

"Promise!"

She began to feel a curious domination in his voice; it made her wriggle her shoulders.

"Why do you tease me?" she said plaintively. "But I'll promise rather than have you get angry."

"I couldn't be angry with you, no

matter what you did.'

"No matter what I did?" echoed Etherea. "Suppose I wrote a novel like Miss ——?" She mentioned a recent notorious novel.

"No fear of your doing that. You don't know enough about life, thank

goodness!"

"You don't know anything about me," retorted the girl. "And I do know about life. How else could I write novels?"

"That is their great charm, life as it

might be, life without its sordid details, life with the dew on, that was what made 'The Hoarded Memory' a delight to a lot of hard, bitter men in a mining camp, men who had seen life as it is.'

"I don't know whether to be glad or sorry I met you," said Etherea, rising. There was a general movement at the supper table, and her eyes were large

with weariness.

"She looks like a tired child," thought Kenniston. "Please be glad," he urged. "Then say I know a lot about life."

"You will find out some day," he answered gravely, "that there is much less in it than you hope, but much more than you think."

"I'm too tired to fight about it tonight, but I don't believe your cousin got all the family subtlety."
"It's not that," he replied. "But in

the places where I have lived a man has time to think.

CHAPTER III.

Three months had passed since the night of Carlieu's party, and during that time Kenniston had called on Etherea with solemn persistency. Her bohemian friends made fun of him, and chaffed the girl about her Philistine admirer. She helped them to make fun of Kenniston's old-world ways and staid demeanor, for Kenniston made her feel dissatisfied with herself, made her chosen way of life seem shadowy. She was determined to make him pay for it, to punish him for obtruding reality into her pretty playhouse.

Etherea would not have been so fascinatingly feminine had her armory been devoid of little weapons; the needle-pointed, jewel-handled weapons which could penetrate the tough masculine hide of her admirer. She would convince him once and for all that she was not the bread-and-butter "flapper" he insisted on considering her; he should learn once and for all that she was a woman of the world, and not a child who needed the supervision of a

nurse. Waldorfe did his best to make Etherea discourage Kenniston's attentions.

He saw in this simple, aggressive man a real menace to the plans which he had formed for Etherea's future. He was afraid of him. In spite of his sangfroid, Kenniston could sit Waldorfe out when he found him in Etherea's little drawing-room. One day when he had done this, Etherea showed her displeasure by maintaining a prolonged silence. She was determined to give her admirer no help in explaining his object.

"I suppose you are put out because I drove your friend away?" said Kennis-

ton, at length.

"Not in the least," replied Etherea. with airy insincerity. "Your tenacity was most flattering.

"I came to talk to you about that chap

-not a pleasant job exactly.

"But easier than talking about him to his face," said Etherea spitefully.

"That is out of consideration for you. I have no objection to say what I have to say in the man's presence as far as I am concerned.

"What have you against him?"

"Unfortunately I am not in a position to tell you what I know. I was told something under a promise of secrecy. Until I can get the man who told me to release me from that promise all I can tell you is that Waldorfe is, according to the standard of the average man, a blackguard, that he is a dangerous friend for an unprotected girl-for any girl, as far as that goes.

"That is a very easy charge to bring." cried Etherea hotly. "You expect me to cut Mr. Waldorfe on a vague statement of that kind? It is preposter-

"Am I the kind of chap to say things about a man behind his back, without the very best of reasons? You are by way of being a judge of character, Miss Vaughan; you have known me for three months; you must have formed some opinion about me.

Etherea, used to Waldorfe's tortuous speech, found Kenniston's directness very disconcerting; she fell back on her

feminine supports.

"Really, Mr. Kenniston, I have never given your character any consideration. Why should I?"

"Force of habit," answered the man brutally.

"Aren't you rather conceited-and a

little rude?"

"I am too much in earnest about this matter to be polite. There are certain things I know about Waldorfe, and other things which I regard as highly probable. It is just possible that he might get you into a position at the present moment which you would find very unpleasant. I always felt that the man was crooked, now I know it, and I'm not going to see your life ruined because I wish to appear polite."

"I don't see what my life has to do with you," exclaimed Etherea plaintively. "Why can't you leave me

alone?"

"If I found a lost child in the streets I wouldn't leave it to be run over by motor busses. I'd take steps to see it into some place of safety."

"But you have no right to assume that I can't look after myself, none whatever!" cried Etherea irritably.

"Your friendship for a man like Waldorfe proves that you can't. Your blindness to the dangers you are running shows that you want looking after. As to what your life has to do with me, I think you know. But as you pretend you don't, I'll try and make you see."

"Do you mind if I smoke a cigarette while you are doing it?" asked Etherea

viciously.

"It's your house, your own little doll's house, I have no right to dictate what games you shall play in it."

Etherea snapped her gold cigarette case shut with a venomous click.

"You might have the politeness to of-

fer me a match."

"I used to feel this way when I was a small boy," said Kenniston good-naturedly, as he held out a lighted match. "It is burning all down one side," he added, as he watched the paper blacken.

Etherea threw her cigarette away,

and lit another.

"Now, go ahead, and tell me the story of your life, or whatever it is you wish to unburden yourself of; you won't disturb me in the least." She coiled up her feet on the directoire sofa, and assumed an aggressive-

ly comfortable attitude.

Kenniston sat where the girl's eyes could not entirely evade his own; he felt that he could afford to throw away no advantage in this contest of wills. He had not meant to tell the girl what he was going to tell her; he knew that the time was not ripe; and yet it seemed the best hope of gaining an influence over her.

"You asked me what your life has to do with me. I am going to try and make you understand." Etherea puffed defiantly. "All my life, until last year, I have worked"—he spoke in a low voice which was not too steady—"many jobs in many places. A good many of the jobs were not the ones a man would choose if he had a choice. Do you know why I worked?"

Etherea blew an insolent ring.

"You can't pretend it was for me." "It came to be you. At first it was some woman whom I could not see, but I knew that she was somewhere in the world; then, as I grew older, she became more distinct, yet still a shadow. In the lonely places where I have lived there are no women, only the shadows of women; we call them from somewhere, and they cluster about the smoke of the camp fire in summer, they come down the shanty chimney with the back draft in winter, to each man the shadow of the woman he is working for. They are women we can talk about because we have never met them. who is working for some real woman whom he has left behind him somewhere hardly ever talks about her. Maybe he'll show a photograph or something which she has made, but he doesn't discuss her the way a man can discuss the woman who is only a shadow. What was it my cousin made out I'd said? Oh, yes, I remember, that the souls of good women are made by strong men in silent places. It's true, though, and the strange thing is this: the worse the men the better the women they create, the higher the ideal they

Etherea did not even look up to see if

he was talking for effect; she knew by the slight tremor of his voice that he was talking from out the depths. What he said had touched her, and that made her furious. She gave a sarcastic little laugh.

"I'm no class morally. I must have been made by one of the very good

men."

"I don't think so," he replied dreamily. He was wondering what she would have thought if she had seen him killing Hank Bass.

Hank Bass

"As a matter of fact, very good men bring out my very worst qualities. You have no idea what an effect they have on me. You, for instance—"

"You ought to have kept that for one

of your novels."

Etherea colored, for it was a line from "The Villain," a novel which she

was writing at the moment.

"We are wandering away from what I am trying to make you understand," he suggested gently. "I told you that each man worked for some woman, real or imaginary. The woman I worked for was very like you; after I had read 'The Hoarded Memory' I knew that the shadow which I had called up really had a body, that somewhere in the world I might find her. It was after that I made my strike. took some desperate chances for the sake of a woman I had never seen, but I won. I think the greatest pleasure I had in all those years was picturing the house in England I was some day to buy. Sometimes I got a copy of The Field. There is no reading in the world to compare with the advertisement of English country houses for sale in The Field-I mean when you are living in the wilderness."

"Those country-house advertisements always suggest rats, and mice, and damp passages to me," said Etherea, sniffing; she was finding it more and more neces-

sary to harden her heart.

"To me they meant that it was worth while going on with the struggle, a reason for getting to my feet again when I had been knocked down; they meant the goal posts to which I was fighting through the scrimmage. There was one

in Norfolk I wanted more than any other—twelve bedrooms, billiard room, smoking room, gun room, oak-paneled entrance hall, three thousand acres of shooting, small, well-wooded park."

"Didn't it have a drawing-room?" asked Etherea, forgetting that she was taking no interest in this man's dreams.

"I suppose it did," he answered vaguely, "but it was before I had read 'The Hoarded Memory.' When the woman of my dreams was still a shadow."

"Underneath the billiard table, inside the gun cupboard, any place good enough for her, I suppose. So like a

man!

"After I had read 'The Hoarded Memory' I paid more attention to the drawing-rooms and the gardens in the advertisements. The shadow was getting more real then, but the place in Norfolk had been bought by somebody else before that. I nearly had it, though. I was gold mining at the time; I was within a hundred feet of a great fortune. The man who struck the vein died six months afterward; the poor chap got no good out of it. I might as well have had it, and the place in Norfolk—losing that place was one of the bitter moments of my life."

"Perhaps the drains were bad, and the somebody died of typhoid," suggested Etherea hopefully, again forgetting that she was taking no interest.

"No! He's living there now. I went down to Norfolk to see the place when I came back to England; prowled around outside; there was a duck decoy, but he's let it go to pot and turned down golden pheasants. I hear the county hasn't taken to him. There was some talk about his selling."

"Perhaps you'll get it yet. You always get what you want, don't you?"

"Etherea!" Kenniston suddenly leaned forward, and took her hand. "Don't you see it is you I want? I have always wanted you. You were not much more than a"—all lovers are poets for a moment, God lets them sing for their mates—"than a moonbeam once, but I wanted that moonbeam. The place in Norfolk was only a house for you to

light—only a frame for the picture; all the country houses I ever longed for were only houses for you. I never went out in my imagination to mark timber or see how the turnips were growing and the young pheasants coming on but you were with me. I had your hand in mine as I have it now. I met your soul when I met your first book. Then I met you, and all I have ever worked for and planned for is coming true, isn't it?"

He looked questioningly into the little face among the cushions on the sofa, but the long lashes veiled the eyes; only by the pace of her breathing could he have known that a conflict was going on. It was less what he had said than the magnetism in his strong, restful voice, which was influencing her, the calm way in which he had passed over her little attempts at flippancy as the incoming tide laps over a child's castle of sand. She found herself struggling against a languorous longing to end her resistance, to allow her weakness to be absorbed into his strength, to fling herself blindly into the pagan arms of nature.

The waves which beat against the cliffs beneath the tower, the spray scudding on the storm, the mountains, the heather, the gorse, the moorland lake, the red-cheeked children who played about the little fisher huts, all the elemental forces which had gone to the making of her urged her to trust herself blindly to this man, to be one with the farthest star, the nearest wild flower. She had a wild inclination to tell Kenniston all, to say to him: "I am lost in these twisty streets. Take me away, and let me forget them."

His own words came back to her: "There is less in life than you hope, more than you think." They were true; there had been less in life than she had hoped. She was often bored in London. Looking back on her little span of life, she realized that nature had never done that to her—she had only thought it would. The sad faces, the hopeless faces, the dreadful faces, the bored faces were on the pavements, not in the lanes.

She knew well enough what it would mean yielding up her personality to a man like Kenniston. There would be no playing at life with a small dog and a big motor, in a flat where children were forbidden by the lease; there would be no encouragement to follow out the labyrinths of her soul. Life would have to be to her as it was to this man with the broken nose and who held her hand—either a simple problem or a hopeless tangle.

Etherea was like a weary traveler overcome by the desire to sleep in the snowstorm; she had only to cease struggling toward the lights of the city, which had always seemed so near, yet always eluded her. She had only to yield her will to this man, then nature and all the conventions would use and protect her.

These thoughts fought in Etherea's mind to the accompaniment of Kenniston's continued plea: "Give me the right to look after you. Life is too complicated for you. You are too sweet a thing to fight alone. I love you, I love you; let me protect you—I love you."

He knelt by the sofa, and bent his face down to the girl's. His lips were poised above, hesitating, doubtful as to whether they might dare to give way to a wild longing to kiss the parted petals that quivered beneath them. Had they swooped and clung in primitive passion, ignoring the inevitable resistance, as Etherea half hoped they would, the conflict within would have been decided in that one stormy moment. But Kenniston's courage failed, and he murmured the fatal words: "May I?"

He broke the spell he had woven, and the heroine of "The Villain" seized hold of her creator, pulled her to her feet, and showd her the lights of the city down below. "Send him away, send him away! He stands for all you have fled from; he thinks you have failed in your fight against the conventions; he wants to drag you back into their grasp, to make you part of the daily round, the common task; you will be the mock of all emancipated woman. He will make you the keeper of his house, the mother of his children."

"But he is so strong," moaned Etherea. "I feel myself being drawn into him by the sheer power of his will. I can't fight against it. I am tired of fighting. I can't make this man go away: he is stronger than I am."

away; he is stronger than I am."

"It is quite easy," said the heroine of "The Villain." "Convince him once and for all that you are not the ideal he has been spinning out of moonbeams in the wilderness. A little laughter, a little mockery! Shock him! Shock him! He treated you like a child about that cigarette; show him that you are a woman of the world—a little laughter, a little mockery!"

"May 1?" Kenniston pleaded once

more

Etherea's eyes opened, and the heroine of "The Villain" looked out of them derisively. The girl pushed Kenniston away, laughing, as she swung her feet

to the ground.

"I should be arrested for obtaining kisses under false pretenses," she cried. "I am not a bit the kind of young person you think. I always told you so, but you wouldn't believe it. You want some one to see that the cook doesn't overdo your meats, that the housemaid sweeps out that moated grange with fitting regularity—when you find one sufficiently far from wicked London. You want some one to relieve your feelings on when you are cross, to tell your anecdotes to when your dinner has agreed with you."

She paused for breath. Kenniston

looked at her in amazement.

"I don't see myself in that picture," she continued loftily. "I don't fancy the part you assign to your leading lady. I want more of a musical-comedy part. I don't want to play to the family circle. Men go out into the world and have a good time; when they begin to get a little battered they get respectable. Women have looked upon that scheme, and found that it is good. They have a higher mission to-day than being house-keepers."

Kenniston had begun by gazing at this changeling in amazement, but now a very different look began to come upon his face. He walked to the other end

of the room. Etherea felt that she was acting magnificently at last, she had shocked him a little. She redoubled her efforts.

"But don't despair," she went on.
"Your dream may yet be realized. The
rural districts are full of good housekeepers; their ruddy faces already displaying the ravages of domesticity."

Etherea was quoting from "The Villain." She was talking in the character of her heroine in gay, cynical tones. She felt that she was having a success.

Then Kenniston turned round. Etherea hardly knew him. His weatherbeaten face had gone rather white; the kindliness had gone out of it, was replaced by a look of stern sadness; he appeared suddenly aged. The heroine of her book abruptly took wing, and left her creator in the lurch. She had meant to disillusion the man, but not to bring that look into his face.

"I don't think—it will be necessary—to say any more." He spoke in a dull, level voice. "I can quite see that I have been making a mistake. I have been boring you with my silly dreams and ideals. I'm afraid I must have seemed rather a fool. I feel as though I had been talking to some one under the impression that she was some one else entirely. I quite understand now that you belong to a world which I don't understand, and therefore cannot appreciate. I am afraid, Miss Vaughan, that I have been no end of an idiot, forcing myself and my ideas on you when you wanted to think of something entirely different."

"I can look after myself—I can—I can—I can," broke out Etherea irrelevantly. "It was ever so nice of you to feel that you wanted to take care of me, but I don't want any one to take care of me. It's such a lark being on your own; it's such a silly, old-fashioned idea that women can't look after themselves. It's—Oh, please go, and please don't be angry with me."

and please don't be angry with me."
"Angry with you! Why should I be angry with you? I have lived too long out of civilization. I might have known it would have been moving all the time while I was dreaming

and working. I blew a bubble vesterday. It touches the world of to-day and bursts. That is no earthly reason why I should be angry with you. But you once made me a promise the first night I met you at Carlieu's party."

'Did I? What was it?" she asked

miserably.

"That if you ever found that you had made a mistake, that you needed help, you would let me know. I do not absolve you from that promise. Good-by."

He turned, and left her.

CHAPTER IV.

Round tables clustered across the Smart Set Restaurant like little worlds in the heavens of a doll's universe, and because it was Sunday night all the little worlds were inhabited; because they were inhabited by human beings there were on each two, or multiples of two. Male and female they were created, male and female they dined; but for the most part the tables were Edens for the enjoyment of one Adam and one Eve. Every beast of the field, every fowl of the air, every fish of the sea was also present, but tamed to the use of man by that greatest of all tamers, the chef.

At some of the tables it was the dawn of creation; serpents in the form of waiters tempted with menus from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; at others it was judgment day, for bills doubled up to conceal their length were being presented by avenging angels, also

in the form of waiters.

The shadowy music, which had throbbed through the hum of conversation like the voice of a stifled conscience, for the moment died down, and human speech leaped forward feverishly.

One table supplied an exception, a little world of two. Conversation there was as moribund as the voice of the first man and the first woman whose speech had been freshly stunned by the voice from the skies. The silence at this table was all the stranger because its occupants were David Waldorfe, the brilliant talker, and Etherea Vaughan.

Their dinner had not been altogether

a success. The man had exhibited signs of strain, nervousness, excitement; his brilliantly haggard eyes had from time to time sought the girl's, as though ordering her to listen to something which he found it difficult to say. Then, instead of making his emotions articulate, he had abused the food which he hardly tasted, the wine which he drank in absent-minded quantity, or the waiter whenever he could secure his fleeting

"I say, let's get out of this," frowned the man at last. "Let's have our coffee outside. The painful attempts of that old woman opposite to be young, and that young man to be old have got on my nerves. All sustained effort is a

dismal spectacle."
"Yes, David," acquiesced the girl, and slipped a small gold purse across the table.

Seclusion was the guiding principle in Waldorfe's choice of a palm tree. They thrived wonderfully beneath a blazing sky of glass in that exotic garden where Etherea Vaughan and her companion wandered, on leaving the dining room.

The music was superior to the variety which usually throbs in the caravanserai; in fact, it was really music, but its very excellence gave Waldorfe cause

for complaint to-night.

"Fancy playing 'Tristan and Isolde' in these outrageous surroundings," he grumbled, as he handed Etherea his opened cigarette case. "Culturine for the wealthy masses, I suppose. Ragtime would be more honest.

Etherea took a cigarette, after looking about with a charmingly furtive glance. She had emancipated herself from most of the conventions which hamper her sex, but the heiress of ages of restraint was still tyrannized over by ancestral habit. Women smoke in one of two ways-like the adventuress on the stage, or the naughty child up the schoolroom chimney. Etherea smoked like a naughty child.
"Liqueur?" asked Waldorfe, signal-

ing to a waiter.

"I think I'll take a crème de menthe," replied Etherea. "It's such a

lovely color; it goes with the green trellises of the garden and the palms."

Very old cognac seemed to harmonize with Waldorfe's needs—very old, and plenty of it. He instructed the waiter

to leave the bottle.

Etherea looked at him with the indulgent eyes of the woman who admires. But the man's restless excitement, the feeling of something unsaid, something which it was hard to say because it was very unpleasant, began to communicate a feeling of uneasiness, a

sense of something wrong.

Etherea remembered that the trains of life are rather silent, that only the stations are noisy. She realized that her train was about to stop at a station, it was bumping over the points. Waldorfe had thrown down his cigarette, he was leaning a little nearer, frowning a little more. The last notes of *Isolde's* "Liebes Tod" were dying away.

If Waldorfe had taken a long time to reach the station, he halted the train with startling abruptness when he ar-

rived.

"I'm in the devil of a hole," he began, and looked at his companion to see how she was going to take the blow. "You're in it, too."

Etherea's lips quivered pitifully, like a child's when it suddenly realizes itself

in a scrape.

"Oh, what is it? Why can't you tell me? And please stop looking so—so

very---

"It's my wife." Waldorfe hurled down the words defiantly. "She is go-

ing to divorce me."

"Your wife!" Etherea half rose as she cried out the words. "But you never told me you were married!" The girl's hands fluttered among her little

belongings on the table.

"Sit down," commanded Waldorfe, and Etherea obeyed. "No, I never told you I was married. Why should I? I never made love to you. You did not believe in anything but friendship between a man and a woman. For goodness' sake be consistent!"

"I suppose you are right. Of course,

it is no concern of mine." Etherea forced out the words bravely.

"Was no concern," corrected Wal-

dorte

"How do you mean 'was'?"

"Because it is now. My wife has found your letters to me. She proposes to make you the cause in the divorce proceedings. You are the one who will suffer."

"I don't understand." The girl looked painfully puzzled, but already in the grip of alarm. "Why should I suffer? I've had nothing to do with your wife. I've done her no harm. I've never done any one any harm."

The man paused for a moment to select words which would bring the situation home to this innocent wanderer in bohemia, this little child who had lost her way, but had hitherto wandered happily about the new, strange streets.

"Oh, that's true enough. No one knows better than I." He quelled the rudiments of a sneer. "It has been a pretty idyll. To me almost painfully platonic. But the world does not deal in subtleties when it discusses the relationship of men and women, and as for his wife—well, his wife is almost vulgar on the subject. My wife, for instance, is brutally vulgar. She hasn't a particle of soul, not even a temperament, but oh, the very devil of a temper, and she's angry with you."

"But why?" wailed Etherea. "Why should she be angry with me? It isn't

as if-

"But she thinks so. She honestly believes it. As I say, she has no soul; she thinks the worst."

Etherea's face blushed angrily, and

she half rose.

"This is abominable—it is monstrous—and to choose this of all places."

"Don't make a scene," said Waldorfe, under his breath. "Please sit down."

Etherea collapsed.

"I know it must seem cruel," continued the man. His voice, when he chose, had a singularly compelling effect upon Etherea. It was low, vibrant, very musical. "But believe me, such catastrophes are discussed most sanely in—in a straight waistcoat." He made

a gesture which included the palms, and the people, the waiters, and the lights. "It is absolutely essential to your safety that this catastrophe should be discussed

very sanely."

Etherea's poor little wings were fluttering painfully against the meshes of the trap. The strange thing was that this man, with the worn, picturesque face, whose baleful dullness had almost repelled her earlier in the evening, was exercising some spell over her, now that he was letting loose his sordid lightning.

"But you must tell her, you must tell your wife! You must make her understand that I—that we————It's so

hard to talk about it."

"I have. Of course, I left nothing

unsaid before it came to this."

"What did she say? You can make people believe you even when—I mean that you had only to tell the truth."

"It is never so hard to be convincing as when you are telling the truth. After you have seen more of life you will un-

derstand that better.

"Even if she did believe us," went on Waldorfe, "it would not make any difference. Divorce is like our hopes of heaven: it is based on the unseen. A man, a woman, the opportunity, a private detective. Even servants' testimony if corroborated. You live alone, in your own house. By the way, you'd better sack your maid. She's a wrong un. I've been seen coming from your house. You have been seen coming from my studio. I think I sometimes warned you, but you always insisted that women should be free to lead their own lives. They should. They are-if they don't mind the consequences."

"It is infamous! And, oh, how lightly you take it! But I forgot," she added bitterly. "You said you had nothing to

lose."

"I take it lightly," he replied, "because I see a way out of the tangle. If my wife has no soul she has at any rate a business head. Such people are the easiest to deal with. She desires her freedom from me for business reasons, a certain marriage of the theater which would advance her in the profession.

If it were a case of two souls holding out their arms through space the matter would be hopeless; being entirely a question of finance, it can be stated in

money."

"I am going home," said Etherea, with sudden resolution. She had been thinking rapidly as the man spoke in the cynical, airy fashion which had once fascinated her. "I don't mean to Chelsea. I mean to my people in Wales. The world has suddenly grown sordid, my fingers touch grime everywhere. I'll tell my people that they were right. I'll ask them to forgive me for leaving them. I'll ask them for protection. I'd like to start to-night. Make that music stop! No, it doesn't matter. I'm going." There was a touch of hysterics in her voice.

"Steady!" Waldorfe spoke in a strong whisper. "I told you that this had to be discussed sanely." He held out his cigarette case. "Take one!" he ordered, as though he was forcing medicine on a child. He well understood the value of

associated ideas.

Etherea obeyed; her will had yielded to this man's control too long to be lightly emancipated. He struck a match, and held it across the little table.

"That's better," he said, as a smoke wreath left her lips. "You'll be all right

now.

"I am going back to Wales," insisted Etherea. "You can't stop me; no one

can stop me."

"That is true, Etherea. But what good will it do? The summons to appear to answer to my wife's divorce petition will be served one day later, that is all, and in the—er—somewhat unsympathetic bosom of your family. You can't play ostrich with the law."

The girl moaned. The utter helplessness of her position was forcing itself on her notice. For the moment she hated Waldorfe—the velvet collar of his coat, the big black satin tie, the profusion of his hair, all the artistic eccentricities in which she had formerly delighted.

"Look here, Etherea, I'm frightfully sorry for all this—this hole I've got you into; but how could I foresee such a

complication? Luckily, as I told you, it's only a question of money; anything's better than getting into court, into the newspapers. A girl, a wellknown authoress, it would be the sensation of the day, and it would ruin you with your public."

"Of course it will ruin me," answered the girl apathetically. She was feeling

utterly crushed.

"Not if you do as I say-settle with her; a couple of thousand pounds would do it. Your literary name is worth that, not to mention your-well, other things."

"Two thousand pounds! I'm very

hard up. I've lent-"

"Oh, I know," interrupted the man impatiently. "I owe you a lot, but I can't do anything about that till my pictures are sold." Waldorfe's pictures were always about to sell; for years they had been on the verge. Meantime they had realized for him in loans the price of masterpieces.

"Two thousand pounds," repeated

Etherea, in a dull voice.

"She will give up the letters for that

sum."

"But there's nothing wrong about the letters," wailed the girl. "You know quite well they are from one soul to another."

Waldorfe grinned sardonically.

"Of course I know it. A jury se-- lected in Chelsea would possibly believe them to be merely transcendental, but my wife's lawyer would give them a very different interpretation, and the man in the street—and he's the jury well, he's not yet educated up to transcendentalism. The jury would probably give my wife two thousand pounds damages. You'd better buy her off beforehand, and save your name."

"But I haven't got two thousand pounds," wailed Etherea. "I seem to have spent all my money. I am living on the royalties from my book. come in a few pounds at a time.'

Waldorfe's face changed very swiftly at the words. Was it possible, he thought, that all his carefully devised plans, his long-played game, was to go for nothing? He had been two years

working up to this dénouement. He had racked his brain over the wording of those letters which he had written to the girl in order to get suitable repliesreplies which, though as innocent as a baby's in fact, would have all the appearance of compromising documents in the hands of a clever lawyer.

It was not a pretty plot, that which Waldorfe and his wife had hatched up. They really wanted to be free from their worn-out chains, and Waldorfe had seen a way to accomplish their object at Etherea's expense. Then he had meant to marry her, and live off the income from her novels. His wife would repudiate the bargain about the two thousand pounds later on. Evidence was easily manufactured; the Vaughan girl was so guileless and trusting.

But suppose it was true that there was no money to be had.

tightened the thumbscrews.

"I suppose, then," he observed, "that I'd better tell my wife that you are unable to settle with her, and that she can commence proceedings.

"Oh, no! No, don't!" wailed Etherea. "Give me a little time to see what

I can do.'

"Of course, I'll do what I can. Naturally I will. I blame myself very much. You are going to the fancy-dress ball at the Botanical Gardens, aren't you?"

"Yes; Lady Derrismore is taking me." "You can tell me there. That gives

you two days,"

"I can always kill myself if I can't

find the money.

"Don't be a little fool," replied Waldorfe, getting up to go. He spoke cheerfully; there evidently were some hopes of the money, after all.

CHAPTER V.

Etherea had passed a dreadful night. All her smiling little world was crumbling; a new, merciless earth was forming under her feet, an earth inhabited by angry enemies. Waldorfe, for instance, upon whom she had depended as a mentor and guide, who had made her feel that she was indeed living the emancipated life, had suddenly become nothing

but a dreadful danger. She might not even blame him for the disaster which threatened. As he said, it had been no concern of hers whether he was married, since marriage had been ignored as a possibility, denounced as Philistine.

Among the crowd of hostile faces which peopled the merciless earth she saw only one face which was kindly, one hand stretched out to her. That face, that hand, belonged to Kenniston. She could hear his voice insisting on her lightly given promise: "If you ever find that you have made a mistake, that you need help, you will let me know." How could she keep that promise? How could she acknowledge that he had been right and she had been wrong? She could not.

But she was reminded of Lady Derrismore. She might ask her advice as a woman of the world; she would pretend that it was the case of a friend of hers.

Etherea put the case to Lady Derrismore the next night as they dined together before going on to the fancydress ball at the Botanical Gardens. She explained the situation haltingly. Lady Derrismore smiled cynically.

"Tell your friend," she said, accentuating the word, "that it is probably a put-up job between the man and his wife. Tell her to place the case in the hands of a solicitor with a long head, or of some nice man with a heavy fist—the latter for choice."

"But suppose she has no nice man

with a heavy fist?"

"Then she must be a little rotter, Every nice girl has some man with a heavy fist anxious to use it on her behalf. There are very few blackguards such as your friend seems to be afflicted with, but there are heaps of decent chaps anxious to pulverize him."

"But he's not a blackguard. You see,

it isn't his fault."

"My dear girl," answered Lady Derrismore, "it's a blackmailing scheme of the most obvious description. However, it's time to start."

The throb of the dance music came down the path to meet them; the lights from the great glass dome disputed with the moon for the right to throw shadows. Across these shafts of darkness strange figures moved mysteriously on the lawn among the shrubs and the trees: Norsemen revisiting the scenes of ancient rapine; Valkyries with winged helmets and draperies crimson with the blood of dead warriors: Bedouins and bullfighters; Indian chiefs and the These last courtiers of many kings. were there also-kings disfranchised by death, sans subjects, sans empires. The moonlight played strange pranks with the carefully designed costumes, for the moon is no respecter of colors; only the silver of Etherea's dress became more alive than ever; she was dressed as a moon maiden, so the moon was kind to

The figures passed each other silently, gliding by unnoticed, disappearing into heavy shadows swallowed up by darkness.

Out of the darkness came the figure of a monk in a white cowl.

"Our dance, moon maiden," he cried, and the voice was unusually thick.

Lady Derrismore recognized it as Waldorfe's.

"He has been drinking," she thought, "and will need a man's heavy fist this night."

She hurried on to look for Kenniston, who was disguised as a cowboy, but as he was also looking for her, it was long before they found one another.

"I think that little authoress of yours has finished taking the world to pieces, John," Lady Derrismore told her cousin.

"She has taken mine to pieces, anyway," he replied. "I am afraid I have been mistaken about her."

"Well, she has been mistaken in Waldorfe, I gather, so she may put yours together again for you."

Lady Derrismore explained the situation to Kenniston.

"Go! Go away!" Etherea had ordered Waldorfe. "I never want to see you again!"

She, too, had noticed he had been drinking. Never before had he been like this; she was angry and frightened.

"Oh, no, I shan't; we have a good

dear to say to one another, and there's something in your emotion which makes you attractive to me. I have a fancy to kiss you. Your pretty little temper goes to my head; it makes you alluring, endows you with atmosphere. It goes with our exotic surroundings, it mounts to my head with the red wine I have drunk."

They were in a secluded spot. Etherea looked about her for help; there was

none in sight.

He had gripped her slender wrist in his soft hand, strong enough, though, for the girl's fragile strength.

"What do you mean by it?" panted Etherea. "Let me go. You are a black-

mailer. I know it now!"

"Never let you go again, my dear. We are going to be married. You pay my wife two thousand pounds, then she'll let me divorce her. Then you can be married to your David. I thought of that after leaving you last night."

The fact is that Waldorfe had met Etherea's publisher during the day, and had learned that her last book had suddenly proved a great success in America, that she would make a great deal of money. He had become so elated that he had allowed himself to break through his usual rather temperate habits. The drink and the idea that he had the girl in his power had caused him to throw off his usual calculated reserve. Etherea was seeing the real Waldorfe for the first time.

There was a look in his eyes quite new to Etherea, and very alarming, as though the devil in monkish guise had suddenly revealed himself. The girl struggled to release herself from his physical touch, but he only caught her other wrist, and tried to drag her to-

ward him.

It is not so very easy to kiss a girl against her will when she is armed with aversion. Etherea managed to keep her head down, and the struggle continued. At last Waldorfe succeeded in getting both her wrists into one of his hands. That left the other free to force up her chin. As she raised it her eyes saw Kenniston not very far away, coming in from the garden with searching eyes.

She called him by name, and when Waldorfe saw that he had heard, and was coming toward them, he dropped the girl's hands.

"Little fool! Little fool! You won't like what will happen if you bring him

down on me."

"I don't care what happens!" she panted.

Waldorfe stood his ground.

"Save me from that man!" cried Etherea, and, like a frightened child, flung herself into Kenniston's arms. "Don't let him touch me! Kill him if he tries to touch me, kill him anyway! He is too vile to live, and I am too weak to even hurt him." She was sobbing hysterically.

Kenniston put the girl gently aside,

and strode up to Waldorfe.

"Well, sir, what have you got to say for yourself?" he demanded. "What have you been doing to Miss Vaughan?"

Waldorfe, who could not see that he was in any danger, only laughed cyni-

"That is between me and my future

wife."

"Don't let him say that," pleaded Etherea. "It's not true."

"That's where you are wrong. You seem to forget. What a little fool you are."

"Make him go away."

"You hear, sir!" commanded Kenniston. "Get out of this—get out very quickly, or I'll make you."

"A little force," suggested Waldorfe suavely, for he could never overlook an opportunity to convert any well-known saying, "is a dangerous thing."

"You're right about that, but, damn it, sir," exploded Kenniston, "if I use force it won't be a little force; it will be

more than enough."

Kenniston felt again the bristles of a human throat in between his fingers as he had felt the throat of Hank Bass. He was so dreadfully afraid that his self-control might slip its collar that he put his hand behind his back.

"I shan't leave this spot," swaggered

Waldorfe.

Kenniston raised his booted leg con-

temptuously, and kicked him gently, but with insult.

"Then you'd better resent that. We

are the same size."

Waldorfe's face purpled with fury beneath his cowl. He suddenly caved in, and said to Etherea:

"I shall leave you, since this cowpuncher is so very rude as to insist."

He turned, and, for a man who had been publicly kicked, moved away with conspicuous dignity.

"Thank you," said Etherea, looking up with tear-threatened eyes. "You are kinder to me than I deserve, consider-

ing."
"Kinder to you! No, it was to that scoundrel I was kind. I ought to have smashed him-fact is, I was afraid to let myself go."

"It couldn't have done any good. I'm

glad now you didn't.'

"Let's sit down; you don't look up to

dancing,'

"I am not, and oh, but I want to be alone. I wonder if you'd mind? It seems so rude asking you to go away."

"That beast might come back. I expect he is drunk in his own peculiar way. I've always disliked the man, but I'll do him the justice to believe he isn't quite himself. He might come back. Let me take you home. You've had a shock.'

"Please leave me," repeated Etherea,

with pathetically quivering lips.

"I can't; I simply can't bear to think of you unprotected, helpless, for the first beast who takes a fancy to insult you. Every drop of blood in my veins orders me to look after you. In spite of you I feel that it's-well-my job.'

"You don't understand," murmured

Etherea faintly.

That same sweet desire of surrender which had attacked her once before was stealing through her nerves. She was going to swoon. The palms were dipping and reeling about her; they were going to join in the dance. "The best place for a woman to swoon," she felt, was in a man's arms." Funny that it should be so; there was some reason why she must not-at least in this man's arms. And even as she tried to remember the reason she swaved into them.

Kenniston's kisses rained on her closed eyes and parted lips, which neither responded nor resisted. Etherea felt them from afar like pain persisting through anæsthetics, pain transmuted

into an agony of bliss.

The man in whose arms she lay did not know why her surrender was so complete; he did not diagnose the nature of her swoon. He held against him a pliant form which yielded itself with maddening completeness. The pent-up ardor of a self-restrained man broke loose: the kisses he had given in visions or wasted on the sleepless air were about Etherea's face like homing doves at sun-They recalled her consciousness like the tingle of electric batteries.

"Please don't! Please don't!" she murmured sleepily. "It's wrong, every-

thing's wrong.

The feeble movements of her hands endeavoring to repulse her lover only

seemed like caresses.

"Thank God for this moment!" muttered Kenniston. "Right or wrong, it's mine; it's ours; it's tremendous. have we waited so long for it? There's nothing between us."

Etherea, with returning strength, was repulsing him more conspicuously. "You must go away and forget this and me. There is something between us; please don't make me tell you what. Please! Please!"

Kenniston laughed queerly.

"After those kisses, not much. After those kisses-my God, girl, do you think I'd let anything between us live five minutes? I haven't fought my way to this to have it snatched from my teeth unless it's something stronger than I."

"It's something strong enough to kill your love," said Etherea wearily. "It

comes to the same."

Kenniston held her away from his body with a rough gesture, and looked into her eves.

"Do you love me? No lies! Do you

love me?"

"I can't lie to you any more-John." She forced her lips to say the name for the first time. "There's a tremendous

something you are willing me to feel, and I feel it for you. I have flung myself down to you from the cliffs. You have caught me in your arms, breathless and half dead. If that is love-"

He strained the girl hard against his

body.

"Yes, that is love," he said huskily. "Love! As much of it as our senses can experience or express. But there is more, much more, beyond all that, shafts of light which our eyes can't see, and a sort of music that escapes our ears."

"I have not lied to you this time," she pleaded. "Go, before I must - or, worse, let me go-before I break your heart, John-before I break your heart."

"I take you as you are, Etherea, as God and your life have made you, as you are at this moment-caring nothing for the stains of creation-but I take vou."

"You cannot."

"I take you."

"But you don't know."

"I tell you I don't want to know." "Not now, perhaps, not now, but life

will not be always as it is now.

The dreadful sex wisdom of women was dominant in Etherea, dormant in her lover.

"You can't make me marry you justjust because I love you. You have no

power.

"To make you love me, that was the wonderful, the impossible thing. other, that is simple; it follows, you see."

"No, no; my life is too tangled to join to any man's.

"I'll disentangle it."

"You don't understand. I shall be either disgraced or at the mercy of a blackmailer all my life."

"Or the blackmailer at my mercy. Let me deal with him. You must. I

have your promise."

Then Etherea told Kenniston the story, how she had wished to avoid the ordinary ways of love, and planned to live on a lofty plane, and how Waldorfe had taken advantage of her idea and written letters which demanded certain answers, and how she realized now

that in a court they would be given a very different interpretation.

"You give me leave to interview Mr. Waldorfe on your behalf," said Kenniston grimly, his fingers twitching rather unpleasantly, "and I don't think you'll hear much more about those letters or Mrs. Waldorfe-if there is a Mrs. Waldorfe; an accomplice, more likely.

Etherea gave John Kenniston permis-

sion.

"You won't hurt him, will you? At least," she added, remembering his at-tempt to kiss her, "not too much." "Not too much," replied Kenniston

viciously.

CHAPTER VI.

The charwoman who was leaving Waldorfe's studio after "doing it out" admitted Kenniston under the impression that he was a patron of the arts.

"Mr. Waldorfe's chynging his clothes, sir," she said. "'E'll be out presently."

Then she departed.

Kenniston locked the door, and put the key in his pocket. Then he deposited on a table a small roll of paper; it was Carlieu's sketch entitled "Who Killed Cock Robin?"

As he wandered about the studio while he was waiting for Waldorfe to appear from the adjoining bedroom, he seemed to see the life story of the owner written in symbols wherever he looked.

Nebulous splendors of imagination had died away on canvas for lack of The unfinished genuine application. pictures stood on their easels like tombstones on the graves of still-born genius. The place was a battlefield where a man had warred with Nature and the natural. Some of the stage properties were in keeping; skulls grinned in a row over the bedroom door white against a violetvelvet background. On their plundered features Waldorfe had distributed cunning lines, so that they also practiced The artist was at least conthe leer. sistent; he carried his vendetta with Nature across her borders; he shook his fist at the worst she could do.

Kenniston grinned as he gazed up at the leering skulls. He was not subtle, vet his instinct told him that this was the work of a man who feared the thing he mocked at; that even as he shook his right hand in the face of death, the fear of death shook his left. He knew that men who had looked death in the face learn to look with respect when custom has banished fear.

The thought was to Kenniston's liking. His adversary knew the weapon he meant to wield only as an abstract proposition: he would be like a child who fashions a ghost from a turnip, and runs in panic from his own crea-

The other decorations of the studio met with Kenniston's approval. frieze of fishing nets, stained a fine Venetian brown, and fitted with workmanlike leads and corks, seemed a very happy thought. Waldorfe had modeled a mermaid to be caught in the meshes. There were stands of arms which Kenniston knew were not stage properties, and some interesting examples of anarchist bombs and infernal machines. The walls were whitewashed, but the Oriental hangings were selected with great taste and regardless of expense.

Waldorfe emerged from the bedroom about the time his visitor finished his inspection. He passed beneath his triumphal arch of leering skulls without haste, and came forward with perfect self-possession, even an air of superiority. He wore a russet velvet jacket,

very tight at the waist.

"Oh, it's you," he observed. "I'm afraid you have been kept waiting."

"I have plenty of time," replied Kenniston, "and there was a good deal to look at."

"Have you?" said Waldorfe. "I'm afraid I haven't—got an appointment, in

fact."

"In that event," exclaimed the visitor, "I won't keep you any longer than is absolutely necessary, but I don't like being hurried. I provided against it by locking the door. I'm not a quick thinker.'

"What the devil do you mean? It's a bit of confounded impertinence. Un-

lock it at once."

"The key is in my right-hand coat

pocket, if you think you can enforce your demand. If you can't-not much good making it, is there? And it will pay you, I think, to allow me to keep my temper. I don't say this for swagger-it's a mere accident, like your gift for painting-but I am stronger than the average man, always was, and digging and toying with cattle and that sort of thing develop one's muscles.'

"Oh, for goodness sake, don't let's be

melodramatic," sneered Waldorfe.
"We won't. Not because I don't approve of melodrama. On the contrary. I believe that a nation which can't stand it can't stand anything. But this is not the place for it. You will realize that more and more, as you come to understand my point of view. I'm not a genius, Mr. Waldorfe, but yet I'm not a damned fool. Cheap sneers won't help you very much. My temper is acquired. not natural."

"Can't you get to the point?"

Waldorfe's nerves were beginning to lose poise. Kenniston meant that they should. He was playing him like a salmon. In the West he had seen men amuse themselves by "bulldogging." It is not a pleasant sight. Some small concession on the part of the weaker man to the bully's assertion of strength, perhaps his mustache twirled in a certain way at the bully's smiling request, amused the audience. Then further demands abjectly granted, until the unstrung nerves became a hideous spectacle, more than the audience could stand. Sometimes the victim crept out of the jeering barroom into the dark to shoot himself.

"I think you know well enough why I am here, Mr. Waldorfe. If you are really in a hurry, you won't pretend ignorance."

"Well, then, I am not in a hurry.

Make yourself at home."

Waldorfe sat down in a carved armchair near the fire, and began to roll a cigarette, humming a music-hall catch.

Kenniston sat down on the other side of the fire, and took out his cigarette case. Then he remembered that it was empty, so he did not open it; instead, he watched the other man's agile fingers. He had the steady glance of men who have looked across great spaces, and something of the wonder of boyhood still lurked in his eyes. It was a glance such as one becomes conscious of. Waldorfe stood it for a while, then he began to move uneasily in his chair, to smoke his cigarette very quickly.

"I suppose she sent you," he blurted

out at last.

"I asked Miss Vaughan's permission to talk the matter over with you. I told her that I thought it could be arranged."

"It can be arranged by paying my wife the two thousand she asks."

"Nobody is going to pay anybody a red cent, Mr. Waldorfe. The matter will be arranged on entirely different

lines."

"I think," replied Waldorfe coldly, "that you have pushed yourself into a situation which you hardly understand. You may be very capable of handling cowboys, but you overestimate the advantages of physical strength. You know nothing about men like myself."

"Mr. Waldorfe," observed the other

man.

"Yes?"

"If I have failed to make it clear how very thoroughly I understand you, it is because I made up my mind that I would refrain from telling you what I think of you. In the first place, I do not wish to set myself up to judge you. You are what your temperament and environment have made you. In the second place, I should lose my temper. I am simply taking you for granted as a necessary evil of civilization, but I am determined that you shall not be a danger to certain people. You shall not, for instance, blackmail Miss Vaughan, and you shall return those letters of hers which you have in your possession."

"In my wife's possession, you mean."
"I am not going to recognize the existence of your wife in this discussion."

Waldorfe lit another cigarette with that slight air of bravado which proclaims weakness. Kenniston still kept his cigarette case unopened in his hand.

"In that case, Kenniston-"Mr. Kenniston, please."

"Oh, all right. Mr. Kenniston, then.

As I was about to say, I don't see that we are likely to do business. Etherea is—"

"Miss Vaughan!" There was no please, and the name sounded like the sudden lash of a whip.

Waldorfe jumped nervously, as though it had fallen across his face.

"Miss Vaughan, if you like it. I don't see why she can't buy what my wife's got to sell without your intervention. She knows the price of her silence.

She's not going to haggle."

"We shall do business, all right, Mr. Waldorfe, but no matter what your price was, I should advise Miss Vaughan to refuse to pay it. I did not come here to call you names or indulge in personalities; that sort of thing is apt to make a man's temper slip its collar, and I don't want that to happen. When I say that I do not consider that your wife has anything to do with this matter, and that you are a blackmailer, I simply state the fact without prejudice. It is a conviction, and I must act upon it."

Waldorfe did not argue the point; his wife was little better than an idiot—she was simply his tool in this affair. Kenniston had diagnosed the case exactly by refusing to recognize her existence.

"I quite understand," continued Kenniston, "what it is which makes the situation so very serious. Your need for money is so great, and always will be so great, that only some much greater need could possibly put Miss Vaughan's reputation beyond the reach of your unscrupulous methods. Excuse the personality; it is not possible to discuss this matter without saying things that would hurt some men's feelings."

Waldorfe waved the implied apology airily away, together with some cigarette smoke. Then his eyes wandered down to the other man's fingers, which were playing with the unopened cigarette case; their nervous twitchings were in curious contrast to the level calmness of his voice. It made Waldorfe feel vaguely uneasy, as though the fingers played with an invisible card. He tried to appear at his ease. He spoke with re-

newed bravado.

"Look here, Ken—I mean Mr. Kenniston—admitting just for the sake of argument that I, and not my wife, control this situation. At the risk of seeming avaricious, I must explain that there can be for me no greater need than money. A prosperous man like yourself may find it difficult to understand this, but it is true. I would vastly prefer not to be obliged to take this course, but as my need for money obliges me to take it, and as I hold the cards—at least, the letters—some one will have to pay; either you or—"

"Let me explain," interrupted Kenniston, leaning forward so that his eyes came to a level with the eyes of the man who was lolling backward in the armchair. "There is only one thing in life which is stronger than any other desire, the desire to live. The strongest argument in life is, in fact, death."

"We are wandering farther than ever from the point," reproached Waldorfe. "Your ideas are somewhat antiquated. Opinion, not force, is the modern theory."

His eyes strayed from Kenniston's steady glance, and again he got a slight shock as the twitching fingers met his glance; they began to have a dreadful fascination for him.

"On the contrary, Mr. Waldorfe, we are approaching the point as quickly as we can without being melodramatic. In fact, I am surprised that you have not seen it yourself. I know that opinion, not force, is the theory of you advanced people, but I am not afraid of your opinion, while you are afraid of my force." Kenniston's gaze wandered to the leering skulls over the door.

"You have the force," replied Waldorfe, "but opinion will prevent you from using it."

"That's where you are wrong. It is very simple." He paused, as if to select appropriate words. "To put it baldly, if you do not return those letters, and if Miss Vaughan is ever bothered by you or your wife, I shall kill you."

Waldorfe laughed, not gayly, for he noticed that there was now a deep indentation in the cigarette case. Yet not altogether without confidence.

"Kill me! What rot! Men don't do that sort of thing nowadays. What a silly attempt at bluff!"

"It is one of the difficulties of the situation, Mr. Waldorfe, that I may be unable to convince you that it isn't bluff. I fully understand that. You will have to use your own judgment, just as I use mine when I believe you are in collusion about this."

Waldorfe, listening to the calm voice with his ears, watching the excitable fingers with his eyes, found a further slackening of control over his nerves. It showed in his voice, which took a higher pitch.

"You daren't kill me, I tell you. It's absurd to talk of it here in London, with a policeman at every corner."

"I think you exaggerate the difficulties," replied Kenniston, his calm voice uninfluenced by the excitement in the elder man's, "and that probably arises from your lack of contact with anything but coddled life. Death is one of the easiest achievements in existence. Those five skulls over the door were once men. It is easier to kill a man than to persuade him to change his collar. The consequences are, of course, unpleasant, but the thing itself offers no difficulties."

"What a brute you are!" snarled Waldorfe. "You've got no feelings. Men like you oughtn't to be allowed in civilized communities."

"I am trying to discuss this matter without using unpleasant names. I am trying to discuss it calmly. I only want to convince you that I am not bluffing. It would make the situation quite simple if you could come to believe that."

"Well, I don't believe it! You can't make me believe it! You might bully a man, but when you talk about killing kim."

"It's not a pleasant subject, Mr. Waldorfe—we are, I notice, curiously in agreement over many things—but I imagine it is easier the second time than the first."

"Are you trying to make me believe that you have killed a man? Trying to frighten me, aren't you?"

Waldorfe's voice was getting curiously shriller. "Yes," answered Kenniston simply, "I once killed a man."

Waldorfe breathed hard.

"I had to—the case was not unlike the one we are discussing; less subtle, of course, in a cruder civilization, but a woman's honor was involved. I took the man to task, and he tried to shoot me. You can look up the record of the trial—Cherokee County, Montana. That, at least, is convincing, or perhaps this will be sufficient."

He went over to the table, and took

from it the rolled-up sketch.

"You are a judge of pictures, Mr. Waldorfe. How does this one strike you?" He handed it over, and Waldorfe could not help examining the picture. "Do you recognize the portrait?" asked Kenniston. "Broken-nosed man in the dock—that's me. I killed Cock Robin. Carlieu can tell you all about it. He sketched the scene from life."

Waldorfe looked for Carlieu's signa-

ture, and found it.

"You have killed a man. My God! You have killed a man, and you come here and mix with respectable men."

Kenniston laughed.

"Respectable is good," he retorted. "After all, I was acquitted. The man I killed was what is known as 'a bad man,' and in any case it was a fight. I caught his arm before he got his gun cleared, then we fought with our hands; not our fists, you understand—more with our fingers."

Again Waldorfe allowed his eyes to be drawn to the cigarette case. The fingers were busier than ever, the silver was slightly bent. A few cold drops of perspiration came out on his forehead.

"He got his thumb into my eye. They always go for your eyes first. God, how it hurt! But his breath was the worst. I can smell it yet. The whisky really killed him. He was winded, and I got both his wrists into my left hand. That's why I was tried for murder. They said I needn't have killed him, but they didn't know what I knew. About the woman, I mean. You see, he had convinced me just as you have. She wouldn't have had a chance if I had spared him. It's an awful thing to kill any one, but not

so hard the second time as the first, and always easy. Just a tightening of the

finger and thumb.'

"Stop it, you brute!" Waldorfe's voice came in a horrible scream, like a trapped rabbit's on a frosty night. "You great, big, bullying brute! Stop what you are doing!"

"What do you mean?"

"Look at your cigarette case. Ugh! It might be some poor devil's windpipe."
Kenniston for the first time seemed concerned.

"By gad, what a shame!" He looked at the mangled silver helplessly. "I say, why didn't you tell me? I'm fond of that cigarette case. But it's my funeral, not yours, and yet you're squawking like a wet hen. Rummy beggar, if I

may say so."

Waldorfe was breathing hard; he seemed to be quite unnerved, and he crossed the room to where some decanters stood on a small buffet. He gulped down some raw whisky—a good deal of it. Then he returned to Kenniston, who was trying to straighten out his cigarette case.

"Theatrical effect!" he sneered, in a voice which was now under control again, though rather husky. "I suppose you think you've frightened me, but you haven't. Why, all I have to do is to write a letter, and leave it with some one, saying that if I'm found dead you killed me. You mightn't get off so easy

the second time.'

"It's one of those risks," answered Kenniston, "which a man is bound to take. It does not strike me as a very serious one. I may be wrong, Mr. Waldorfe, but I have a feeling that you will never write that letter simply because you know it will never be needed. Each man must act on his own convictions. I think you will come to believe that a hungry dog is better off than a dead dog."

A terrible conviction came over Waldorfe's broken nerves that this man was not talking for effect, that he would move slowly and relentlessly, judging, sentencing, executing, from a simple sense of duty because the case was one

which the law could not reach.

He, David Waldorfe, the brilliant leader and follower of artistic causeries. the darling of many women, the wellknown feminist, ran the risk of being lynched; there was no other word for it -lynched!-in the heart of Chelsea. like some lawless nigger in Alabama. Into this highly civilized society, which had agreed to dispense with force, force would come, the savage from beyond would come and take him by the throat with nervous, gripping fingers, and feel for his windpipe, and mangle it as that cigarette case was mangled. With cunning wits he had stalked his prey, and now, as he was about to seize it, this stronger brute was snatching it from his claws. He knew with dreadful certainty that he was afraid to hold his prey and flout the threat of death.

Then he broke down, and begged the thing for which his wits had worked. Kenniston had never disliked the man so thoroughly as when he cringed to him, nor despised himself so much in

that he felt a sense of pity.

"Don't take her from me, Mr. Kenniston," he pleaded. "You don't know what it means to me. It is my very existence. Only for a whim, a fad, I might have married her before I ever saw you. I have devoted my life for the last few years to Miss Vaughan. I'm not young enough to begin all over again. I may starve, and there are people depending on me."

"Then work for them, that's my ad-

vice," said Kenniston.

"My work doesn't sell. I can't work any more. I have talked so about it that I no longer know what's right or wrong. I've lost my sense of technique."

"Go out to America, and work at something else, then. They'll buy the

work of your arms out there."

"I tell you, I can't work. I can't face the roughness of the world. You can't understand; you are rich. It's easy for you to criticize me, but you are too rich to understand."

"I worked for what I've got. I gave for it everything I had to give. I can't see why you should expect to sponge forever on your friends. I'd be wrong to help you to do that. A man who cannot float must sink to his level."

"You are rich," pleaded Waldorfe.
"It would be nothing to you to buy up

those letters."

"You have nothing to sell, Mr. Waldorfe, for you will return those letters to-day. You dare not keep them—because if you don't return them before six o'clock this evening, I shall kill you. And you know it, so I won't have to kill you. You have nothing to sell, Mr. Waldorfe."

Kenniston took the key from his

pocket. He was about to go.

"Yes, yes, I have something to sell," cried Waldorfe. "You spoke about America. What would it be worth to Miss Vaughan to know that I was in America? Instead of a desperate man starving in London, so desperate that I mightn't care whether you killed me or

not?"

"Yes." Kenniston halted near the door, and meditated. "There is something in that, and, damn it, in a way I'm sorry for you. Tell you what—make it Buenos Aires, and I'll do this much. Write me a letter acknowledging that you and your wife have tried to blackmail Miss Vaughan. With that in existence you won't be likely to return. Then I'll give you five hundred pounds for the contents of this shop; three hundred now, the balance in two installments extending over a year." Kenniston's eyes ranged about the leering faces on canvas. "I can afford the luxury of burning those beastly faces on those conditions.'

In the end a bargain was struck. The letters were handed over, and the masterpieces which had been so productive of loans passed into Kenniston's possession for five hundred pounds and two first-class passages to Buenos Aires.

CHAPTER VII.

"We cannot talk of that now," said Etherea. Kenniston was pleading his cause with Etherea the same evening. "We can never talk of that. Think what there is between us—those letters." "They are torn up, obliterated. Don't ask me how it has been arranged."

"But that man-he has not been ob-

literated."

"As far as you and I are concerned, yes. It has been arranged."

"It couldn't be! How?"

"Don't ask. You must take my word for it. He will never interfere with my wife."

"I can never be that. A girl should come to a man like you with star dust

on her wings."

"A man and a woman," he replied simply, "do not come together through the air; they grub their way through the earth."

"Yes, I am earth-stained. I thought I was in the clouds, but all the time I

was only in the mud."

"As God and your life have made you, Etherea, I take you. As you are at this moment I take you. To me, you will always be the girl who wrote 'The Hoarded Memory.'"

"There are earth stains on my hands."

They were talking under the pressure of a great emotion, yet Kenniston hesitated whether he should say what was in his mind, but he spoke.

"There are bloodstains on mine. Yes, you ought to know it. I once had

to kill a man.'

"How strange! Why?"

"I'm not ashamed of it."
"Was it for a woman?"

"Yes."

"I knew it; some way I knew it."

Then an idea came to her, and she looked up at Kenniston, with horror-stricken eyes.

"Was it-was it that man?"

"I spoke to him about it, but it was not necessary. No, it was years ago, in America."

"For a woman's honor?"
"For a woman's honor."

"I love you. I wish I was worthy of you. I love your broken nose. I love everything about you. I wish I was worthy of you. I wish there was star dust on my wings."

"You are perfect to me, Etherea. I am glad you have the earth stains; we

shall live on the earth.'

"Do things matter as little as that when a man loves? It is wonderful."

"As little as that."

She came closer to him; they were

standing.

"I hope we shall be able to get that country house in Norfolk, the one through which you always saw me moving."

"We shall. It was offered to me last

week."

"It is a very large house, isn't it?"
"Not too large, I think, for it is the place where dreams come true."



SUMMONS

ROUSE thyself, soul! Forget the sweet Or the sad murmurings of the desolate seas! As wingéd, upward turn and beat Resistlessly against the breeze!

Greet the cold vigor of the winter air
Rushing from out the hollow, clamorous caves of hills,
To smite and backward blow thy hair
And sting thy slow pulse till it thrills!

Fight on! The soil shall nerve thy wings:
Thine the vast, pregnant, lonely plains and starlit skies,
And rushing winds that bear great things
And thoughts in which great quiet lies.

Samuel McCov.





HERE'S mother?"

The boy had not banged his way through the house as was his habit when he came from school in the afternoon. He

had entered so quietly that, until his demand came in a half-impatient, querulous tone, the sturdy-hearted Irish woman did not know he was there. Deeply engrossed was she in the nice business of folding the whites of the eggs into the foundation ingredients of the cake for which she was famed.

She looked up, more startled by the tone of the usually cheery lad than the unexpected sound of his voice; and, after a few preservative stirs of the creamy mixture, she wiped her floury hands upon her apron, and drew him near, laying a red wrist against his flushed cheek critically.

"An' is yer t'roat so-ore, lad?" she

queried anxiously.

"Not much," he replied, with a somewhat painful swallow, turning his head away irritably. "Isn't mother ever going to be home again? She is always out."

"She's wit' yer fa-ather, lad. He nades her these days," she added more to herself than to him. "Now, ye ain't goin' out again, are ye?" anxiously.

"I don't know," was the listless response as he tossed his catching glove to the nearest chair. "I want some ice water first, though. Any fixed?"

The woman rubbed her cheeks with

her palm, her troubled eyes still upon him. Suddenly she brightened.

"I'll tell ye what I'll do," she exclaimed, with an access of enthusiasm. "If ye don't dhrink that ice wather, and will stay in the house this afternoon and play wit' yer tools, I'll make ye the bist limonade ye iver tashted in yer loife. What d'ye say to that?"

"All right, Mary," he returned, without interest. "Only hustle the lemonade —I've got a fierce thirst. Where's my

tool box?"

She was now too much engrossed in slapping the golden mixture into the shallow cake tins to manage articulate speech; but he followed the direction of her preoccupied nod, and drew the chest languidly from its hiding place in the cupboard. Laying the tools side by side on the floor, he gazed at them wearily; then slowly replaced them, and shoved the box into its corner again.

"Say, Mary, will you please call me when the dope is ready? I'll be in the

living room or somewhere."

"Sure, lad, I'll find ye. It won't take but a minute to mix it up," was the cheery response; but there was still the troubled look in her eyes as they followed his listless exit.

"Ach, thim wimmin!" she exclaimed under her breath to the swinging door, moving more and more languorously on its hinges. "Thim wimmin that does not care what little lads they hurts wit their lies."

With a deep sigh and a sorrowful shaking of the head, she shoved the tins far into the oven.

Doctor Garriot Fallis turned the latch of the outer door with his key and swung it open for his wife, standing aside with head bared for her to enter the unpretentiously artistic home which for ten years had been called by the flippant "the one oasis in the divorce desert." She caught her breath sharply as she inclined her head in formal acknowledgment, and quickly passed before him through the broad hall into the living room. The air of indefinable reverence which had always hallowed his doing of the little courtesies for her into a hyperdulia seemed to stab her to the heart to-day.

With birdlike swiftness of vision, she swept the big, shadowy room with her glance until it rested upon the couch where the boy lay. She moved quickly to him, tearing the gloves from her exquisitely ringed white hands, and knelt

at his side.

"Oh, laddie mine, what is it?" And in the question was an intensity of pentup anguish not warranted by an occasion for momentary anxiety. "Oh, mother's little son, you are not ill, are you? Not you, too?"

The boy opened his eyes and flung an arm sleepily about her neck, drawing her cool cheek down against his feverish

one.

"Nope," he murmured drowsily as he

closed his eyes again.

Her lips rested on his hair, and she murmured foolish little endearments brokenly.

The man had paused on the threshold like an intruder. Suddenly the boy's

eyes opened again and met his.

"H'lo, dad!" he called, in sleepy friendliness. Then, with an unexpected interest, he slipped his arm from his mother's neck and drew himself on his elbow. "Say, that knife of yours that I borrowed this morning cuts bully. Can I keep it for a while?" he inquired.

The man drew near almost shyly and laid his hand on his son's head. "You bet you may, boy," he answered un-

evenly, with firm yet gentle touch stroking back the tumbled hair, "Keep it as long as you want it. I've got another."

The boy sat up and blinked with delight.

"Gee! Honest?" he exclaimed.

The man smiled half wistfully, and nodded; then his expression changed, and a look of professional interest came

into his eyes.

"Come here, son," he commanded gently, leading the way to the window, where the setting sun was pouring in a veritable crimson and gold glory. The woman rose and stood aside, glancing from one to the other apprehensively, twisting the rings into her tapering fingers until they cut the flesh.

Silently the most expert physician in that great city of the West made his

examination of the case.

"Is—is it anything?" the mother asked, putting her hand to her throat with characteristic gesture.

The doctor smiled and patted his son's

cheek.

"No," he said, "he will be all right in a day or two. But meanwhile"—he turned to the boy with mock sternness—
"the place for you is in bed, young man!"

The childish brows drew together. "But, dad," he began to object.

"Bed!" ruled the physician, with a loving smile which took away the severity of the tone. "Bed! When you are there, I know where you are."

"But it's so lonesome, dad," the boy pleaded; and the man's face was instantly shadowed by a gravity strangely out of proportion to the childish plaint.

"I know it, son," he replied, with a bitter smile; "but that's no excuse for—not obeying the rules. No, sir"—with an instant return to a merry laugh—"if I were a physician and not your father, you might bulldoze me; or if I were your father and not a physician, you might wheedle me; but being both, you can do neither. Here goes! I'll help you."

The woman put out her hand suddenly as he made to lift the boy in play-

ful mood.

"No." she exclaimed imperatively, "I'll look after him-he is mine!"

Again the wistful smile curved the lips of the boy's father as he motioned him to her.

"Run along, son," he said softly. "Mother will tuck you in! I'll fix a gargle for him," he added formally to

his wife.

The intensity of her mother tenderness seemed to infold the boy as a material thing, while with deft yet lingering touch she made him ready for bed. Despite the feverish drowse, the boy tried to assume a half-patronizing attitude toward her care of him. Once he laughed aloud.

"Anybody would think that I was just a kid, mother," he remarked, with a fine importance. "I've gone to bed by myself for three years now. Dad always tells me good night, though."

"But don't I, too, dear? Every The deep pleading in the tone as she knelt beside him and gathered his head close against her bosom invested the question with a strange poignancy.

"Oh, sure," he replied, holding his head a little stiffly in the unaccustomed caress; "but you do it out in the living room, and lots of times other people are there-but dad always sneaks in here after everybody's gone, or when he

comes home at night."

The woman's arms loosened and her breath came in a quick sob. She bowed her head upon the pillow, and through her mental vision flashed a composite picture of these last days-a courtroom crowded with a well-dressed throng, herself smiling, serene, confident, loyally stationed at her husband's side while clever lawyers battled for his honor in the most notorious divorce case that had been before the public in some years. "Out in the living room" of the world she had done her part, but- The boy's voice broke in upon her agony:

"Mother, Ted Burns has got the ton-

silitis," he vouchsafed timidly.

She roused herself to make reply. "Now, you see, dear," she said very quietly, "how glad you ought to be that you kept away from him. You might have got the tonsilitis-and worse," she

added under her breath. "Mother knew best that time, didn't she?" half wistfully.

There was a pause, and the boy moved restlessly. Then he blurted out:

"But I have been playing with Ted Burns, mother. Gee! There wasn't anybody else-you were not around, you know-and a fellow's got to do something with himself."

The fire that had leaped up in her eves at the confession of disobedience died out as she gazed upon the flushed and miserable little face of her son, and saw him swallow painfully, sively she gathered the tumbled head close in her arms-and this time it rested comfortably against her breast.

"Oh, little lad," she said softly, "mother has left you too much alone!"

When she came back into the living room, she found her husband standing in the same attitude in which she had left him, looking thoughtfully into the now faintly glowing west. Soft shadows piled the room.

"Boy is ready for you, Garriot," she

said simply.

The careful Mary, entering at that moment, viewed the dying fire in the grate carefully, and with a judicious air sprinkled a few bits of coal here and there among the red embers.

"It ain't so much fer heat," she explained to the two who were watching her with an absorption that argued ill for the harmony between them, "as to

ta-ake the chill off the air.'

"It is very cozy, Mary," said the woman gently. "It is still a bit frosty without. Don't prepare too elaborate a dinner," she added as the woman turned to withdraw, "for neither Doctor Fallis nor myself is especially hungry."

The serving woman went out quickly, twisting the corners of her apron; and once in her own domicile, she wrung her hands with the sudden anguish characteristic of her Celtic temperament.

"Ach, thim wimmin-thim wimmin!" she cried. And, drawing out a smeary newspaper from the table drawer, she shook her fist at the picture of a beautiful woman on the first page, under headlines that leaped to meet the eye.

There were two other likenesses linked with that of the woman-one a reproduced photograph of a man whose familiarity with the fleshpots of Egypt was stamped indelibly upon the handsome countenance which they had coarsened, and the other a pen-and-ink sketch of a man with clean-cut, finely modeled features, whose firm jaw seemed to belie the bovishly sensuous curve of the lips-the man whom she had just left gazing into the fire in the living room.

Laboriously Mary spelled out the italicized line under the sketch: "The corespondent as he sat in court to-day."

"Corespondent!" she snorted under her breath. "Sure an' I don't believe the masther iver writ a letther to the

vixen in his loife!"

The rage that consumed her was beaten into the potatoes, until they piled light as snow in the dish. The vengefulness of her wrath jabbed the juicy steak until the perfection of its browning was attained. Thus is our righteous unrighteousness often wrought into the greater comfort of those about us.

Dinner was a painful meal. spoke of inconsequential matters, keeping to the safe shallows of conversation, steadily avoiding the deeps in which might lurk treacherous currents to draw them whither they would not go. There was a cold brilliancy in the clever comments of Constance Fallis as she made a studious attempt to preserve the semblance of continuity in their entourage, a vivacity which contrasted oddly with the shy reserve of the man and his formally deferential manner toward her.

Despite her rigid self, however, a breath of relief escaped her when they rose and sought the lesser intimacy of

the living room.

"You are going out to-night?" she

inquired casually.

'There is only one case which I feel that I ought to look up personally—the rest can be done by telephone," he replied gently. "I shall not be gone long. Shall I call for you-anywhere?"

"I have no engagement for to-night," she answered, idly drawing toward her a late magazine.

He picked up an ivory paper cutter

from the table.

"Shall I slit the pages for you? know that is one of your pet aversions."

She bit her lips and stretched out her

hand for the ivory blade.

"It is very good of you to guard me from my pet aversions," she said bitterly, "but I find that I must learn to submerge them."

Without comment, he handed her the slender knife and turned to the door. The slitting of the leaves was the only sound in the room. Determinedly he faced about and retraced a few steps.

"Constance," he said, and there was a purposeful ring in his voice that forced her eyes to his face, "I want to say just one thing about this wretched business, and then I shall never allude to it again if you prefer it. A thing as vital as this cannot be passed over in complete silence by a man and his wife. I am glad they exonerated me of the charge this afternoon in refusing-that cad-his divorce." He forced the words from between clenched teeth. Then more quietly: "I'm glad for myself, naturally -a man does not realize what a precious thing his clean name is until some dog tries to befoul it-but I am ten thousand times more glad for your sake -yours and the boy's. I couldn't have endured to have brought disgrace upon you two; to have you feel that whatever were the facts, you were branded as the wife of a libertine; and to have the boy know in later years that his father had been marked as the kind of a man his mother had taught him not to be."

Her hands lay still while he spoke, then closed convulsively over the ivory blade. The pause was irksome. Desperately she strove for words.

"I-I am glad, too, that you were cleared, Garriot," her stiff lips managed to articulate; and then the knife quietly slit along another paper seam.

The man looked at her curiously, as if she were one whom he thought he knew but was not quite sure. A boyish, shamed flush crept to his brow, and he

spoke impulsively.

"It was—bully—of you, Con, to stand by me through it all. Your absolute belief was what won them, I think, for every circumstance seemed against me, and—she—got tangled up so many times that her defense was practically useless."

A little shiver passed over his wife at the mention of the pronoun, but she said

nothing.

"You have always been awfully—square," he went on, the flush dying into a dull red, "and I appreciate it. I have thought sometimes—often of late years—that you didn't—care—much; but you have always been a mighty loyal

little soul before people.'

His words stabbed her as the boy's had done, "in the living room—before people." What did they want? Wherein had she failed? She failed? And the insouciant lure of the woman whom she had faced smilingly day by day that none might know how low she had been brought swept through her inward vision. Her teeth fastened lightly upon her nether lip.

"Don't thank me, Garriot," she answered, lifting her head proudly. "I was your wife—my place was there."

The shadow of a very real pain grew in the man's eyes as he looked at her.

"So that was why?" he said, in a monotonous tone, repeating the words with a tinge of bitterness. "So—that was why."

The storm within her, so long held in leash, burst upon him with a power that made him instinctively throw back his shoulders and brace himself before it.

"Yes!" she cried passionately, her voice barely above a whisper, yet hurling itself at him with the might of all repressed force. "That was—why! That alone was why! What else had you left me? What do you suppose that verdict which indirectly cleared you meant to me? Twelve men who did not know you, who had probably never seen you before, thought you guiltless; pronounced you guiltless, rather; for, in the face of all that evidence against you, some lurking doubt must be in the mind

of at least one of them. The world, whose opinion you value, has looked upon you and called you good! Your 'honor' is intact! Your 'honor'!" scornfully. "Yes, I stood by you. It was my honor, too. I sat at your side day after day at the trial outwardly calm, inwardly fighting against my unbelief. You won your fight. I lost mine. All that was left me during the last days was a desperate prayer that they might leave the boy his belief in you, and that the name which he was to bear through life might not be tainted with a public dishonor."

Garriot Fallis had whitened slowly under her words, and tiny purple veins were revealed in his temples like welts

raised by a lash.

"You—my wife—believe that the charge was true?" he asked, forcing himself into a tone of calm inquiry.

Her slender height seemed regal, and her eyes looked deep into his as she answered quietly:

"Garriot, I, your wife, know that the charge was true."

The man's eyes lowered before her gaze, and there was silence.

She turned away, and drooped listlessly into the chair again. Her hand tremblingly guided the ivory knife. The fire glowed cheerily, when suddenly a weary log loosened and thudded into a shower of sparks. One sinister ember flashed into the soft folds of the woman's gown and leaped into threadlike flame. The man threw himself on his knees before her and crushed it with his palm.

"I'm afraid that it has spoiled your gown," he said, in a matter-of-fact tone, adding vaguely: "Can't you hide it un-

der a pleat or something?"

She smiled bitterly. "Oh, yes, Garry. Don't let it trouble you. I can always hide scars under—a pleat or something. Thank you," she added, in a formal tone. "I hope that it did not burn you?"

He had not risen from his position, his bended knee resting against the seared fold; and he bravely lifted his serious eyes—wonderfully like her peni-

tent son's-to her face.

"You are right, Connits," he said slowly, using a pet name that her ears had almost forgotten. "You are right—I am guilty. Not, perhaps, in the law sense, but in our sense—yours and mine. Perhaps the letter of the commandment was not broken, but there wasn't much spirit left in it; and the outward keeping of a law is little between a man and his wife—if the rest is gone. I—I should not have told you. I hadn't the courage; but I meant to more than make it up to you, Con, by a lifetime of service, such as I could not have given before—not realizing all that you were to me."

"You expect me to believe?" she cried softly, with a hysterical little laugh, recklessly conscious that never had her faith been more sure. "Do you think that—things can be as they were when a serene confidence possessed me?" In a low, bitter tone she went on: "Women have laughingly asked me if I were not afraid of the temptations that beset the path of a young and fashionable physician, and I merely scoffed the notion or played with it jestingly, so sure was I of your love and loyalty. And now-this-" She hid her face in the white arms clasped loosely about the chair's upright. "Oh, Garry, Garry!" she moaned. "If it were only somebody else! Not you-not you!"

Anguish of soul lighted the signal fires of pain in his eyes, and laggard remorse whipped gray lines about his lips. The longing of the primitive man that swept over him at her helpless grief was thrust ruthlessly aside, and he drew himself rigidly away from her, rising to his feet and grimly viewing the havoc

he had wrought.

Then self, writhing under the pain, stung him into a single volley of defense. A dull red glowed in his cheeks, and the blood pounded through his tem-

ples.

"I am glad that you know the truth, Constance," he said steadily. "Anything will be better than living with that between us. But I don't want you to know only the half truth. I want you to have it all now. With a woman like you, Con, things are either all white or all black. According to what you said

just now, I was a sort of demigod to you before, and now I am to be numbered in your heart among the devils of infidelity. Are you sure, little girl, that you ever took the trouble to find out just what sort of a man your husband really was? Not how successful he was, not what sort of a host he made when you entertained, but what he really was, what he needed to keep him at the daily grind."

Her fingers relaxed their tensity, and her body shivered slightly; it was the only sign he had that she heard. He paused, and drew the back of his lean white hand across his forehead with a weary sigh that seemed to question the use of continuing. Then, as his eyes fell upon the girlish figure shrinking away from him into the big armchair, the babyish tendrils of bronze hair that rested upon the slender curve of the back of her neck, a swift pain stiffened his throat and a low cry burst from him.

"Oh, Con—my wife! You don't understand—you can't understand! I don't understand myself. It was the very desperation of loneliness that I have endured these past two years! I loved you, little sweetheart wife! God knows that I have always loved you as a man can love only one woman in the world! But you were never for me."

She raised a tear-stained face in de-

fiant, questioning gaze.

"Oh, yes, I know," he went on bitterly. "When we entertained-when I accompanied you somewhere, lost you in the throng until time to bring you home again, nervous and tired. And even these little glimpses of you-Con, it was not my fault nor yours that they were made increasingly difficult and infrequent. My practice has grown, and I felt always that the pride you took in this success of mine more than commensured the loss of my companionship. Do you realize, Con, how little we have been together-just you, and I, and the boy? Did you never guess how hungry I was for you-not the brilliant woman that men envied me, not the gracious hostess that women admire, but just you -- you-the one woman-my wife?"

She was very still, but her body no

longer drooped. She turned upon him, and her modulated voice was clear and cold:

"Garriot, are you daring to bring the blame of this thing upon me?"

He turned very white, and tiny flames

leaped into the gray eyes. "You are quite mistaking me, Constance," he said coldly. "You could not have chosen to attribute a motive farther from the truth. I am not even endeavoring to soften your judgment. There is no palliative, and I meant to assume none. I was crudely trying to express myself to you-my emotionsmy mental make-up-what you will-so that you might understand the whole It seemed to my rough man's notion that if you could comprehend it all, it would not be so hard for you to bear. It's giving you what we physicians call the history of the case. You can diagnose better then, Con-that's all. Perhaps, too, you are the one person whom I should like to know-everything. I'll be back in about an hour. Don't wait for me or worry over the boy. I'll look in on him before I go to bed.'

He drew on his gloves and moved toward the spacious entrance hall.

"Garriot!" It was a pleading sound that came to him, and he paused.

"Please tell it all to me—just as a physician would state a case—as you said. I—I want to be just."

She clasped her hands loosely in her lap, and her gaze fixed itself on a weird figure woven in the rug. He fumbled with his glove for an instant, then raised his eyes. He was the physician once more—kindly, impersonal, sure of his

diagnosis.

"There is not much more to say, Con," he replied quietly. "A man in perfect condition can throw off everything, but the trouble is that a man seldom knows whether he is in perfect condition or not. He trusts too much to his own strength—others trust too much to it." He paused. Then: "A man would be a poltroon to seek excuse in the weakness of his own nature, Con; but it is not well for any woman, loved intensely with all the passion of a man's

entire being, and that means the heaven fire as well as the earth fire, my wife to be indifferent to his comradeship, to turn away from the very touch of his hand listlessly and coldly, to let him believe that the big love he is giving is a thing which she righteously endures because of a ceremony performed over it.

"Especially is it not well," he added, in so low a tone that she strained her ears to hear the voice whose note of contrition was like that of her little son's just a while before. "when there is another love longing and pleading for his recognition. A man needs love and comradeship, Con, more than a woman ever dreams. There is a notion put forth in the books of the day that it is always a woman who starves for love; but it is not true. A man hides his hungering for it more—that's all. Con, I've been true to you—but—I accepted—her love."

She knew that he had finished speaking, but she could not raise her eves. She heard him cross the hall presently. and then sounded the click of the outer door. He had gone. Slowly she rose and lifted her clenched hands above her head. She stood so for a moment, looking thoughtfully into the glowing coals. The clock chimed, and the ordinary things claimed her. She banked the fire so that no sparks should escape, and carefully placed the wire screen in front of the wide grate. The magazine, many leaves yet uncut, she laid back upon the table, and then slowly turned off the light in the jeweled lamp. Without volition, she glanced toward the hallway beyond, to make sure that the welcoming beacon was burning there-for him.

Perhaps it was this unconscious act, fraught with its suggestion of intimate habit of thought for his welfare, that probed the depths of her self-control, and a single harsh sob escaped her trembling lips. Weakly she sank to the floor and buried her face in the cushions

of the couch.

"Ten years!" she whispered, twisting her slender fingers to keep back the torrent of grief that swept through her. "Ten years! Oh, God, I can't bear it! I can't!"

Then she lay very still. Unbidden came the memories trooping through her brain; the merry girlhood, with its shy white dreams of the One Man-a man who would stand above other men, who was of finer mold than they, a man who should mean to her all that manhood could mean. Then Garriot's coming, his swift, impetuous wooing, and her dreamy acquiescence. A sharp pang contracted her heart at the remembrance of the pride with which she had announced to her girl friends her engagement to Garriot Fallis, even then, ten years ago, giving promise of the distinction he had since attained.

Her "pride"! As she looked back, it was her pride in him which loomed above all else out of the rosy mists of the past. She was not the type of woman who can love where she feels no pride. She had heard of the pitifulness of great love, but she had never under-

stood it.

Proudest of all was she of Garriot's supreme love for her, its completeness, its reverence, the pure fire which gave it the radiant luster. How regally she had avoided all those foolish little intimacies and tawdry evidences of devotion that might, she feared, dim the beauty of it. Garriot's love had always pleased her æsthetically. What if she had chosen to wear it proudly for all the world to see, rather than to warm it secretly in her bosom? Was it for this that Garriot seemed to reproach her? And not Garriot only—that something within seemed to reproach her?

Her defense weakened into a cry—she had been so sure of his love—she had had such faith in him—and now

she----

She burst into a passion of tears and

hopeless sobbing.

"Faith!" Yes, it was her faith that he had killed! Faith, and her love for

him!

Like a whirlwind her grief swept over her, gathering into itself the strength of her body and soul. There was nothing left that she could cling to. Principles, which her conventional life had pronounced unyielding, bent and withered beneath the fury of the storm. Slender, twiglike outgrowths snapped and fell to the ground, dead things; and all the beauty of the foliage of ideality was stripped from the branches. But the firm roots held fast. The ruins of the Beautiful Grove in which she had dwelt were strewn about her. And then suddenly the storm was spent.

A languorous calm swept comfortingly over her body and soul. The theme of her tragic symphony recurred

murmuringly.

"Faith," something seemed to whisper to her drowsy brain, "the substance of things hoped for. Love, the evidence of things not seen."

Then came quiet and surcease.

When she opened her eyes darkness was all about her. The light in the hall had been turned out. Her husband had returned. Slowly the events of the day ranged themselves in line like a regiment of soldiers ready to do battle against her dearly won calm. She pressed her fingers upon her eyelids as if to close out a sight that she could not bear, and moved slowly up the wide, dark stairs to her own room.

As in a dream, she disrobed, barely conscious of a detached feeling of coolness in the touch of the silk as her feverish body assumed the fragile nightrobe. At the closed door, which separated her room from her husband's.

she stood a moment listening.

There was a slight sound, she fancied, and softly she turned the key in the lock, retreating swiftly, wide-eyed, with an inner fear. Then, ashamed of the dishonor done to him in her own spirit, she reversed the key, and moved across the narrow hall to their boy's playroom, where earlier in the evening she had settled him snugly in his bed.

The silence was ominous.

She ran quickly to the bedside, and started in terror, a cold trembling seizing upon her limbs. The bed, mussed and tumbled, was empty! A wild, unreasoning delirium of fear laid hold upon her. Had Garriot—

The thought could not formulate. Her white feet scarcely touched the polished wood as she sped to the door which opened from the hall into the room which adjoined hers.

"Garriot?" she called softly, breathlessly.

There was no answer. Yet she felt a presence, and with frightened eyes she glided into the room. Her ears, acutely sensitive, caught the sound of regular breathing. With wide eyes that pierced the darkness, she moved forward to the faint streak of light which a street lamp below threw obliquely across the bed. Accustomed now to the shadow, she saw the two dark heads close together upon the pillow, the boy's slender brown arm thrown lovingly across the man's bared chest, and the flushed little face snuggled down into the broad shoulder.

A loneliness that she had never known before swept over her. It was as if the hand which had led her to the Promised Land held her back from entering. Had the little lad crept in there to comfort or to be comforted? That Garriot, physician of the body as he was, should so waive his strict rules to give comfort to the soul seemed to add poignancy to her heart hunger. His words flashed over her with blinding light: "A man has need of love—more than a woman ever dreams."

Something gentle and pitiful came to her, and she leaned over them until her soft heart rested upon the bared chest of the man and nestled the slim little hand which lay there.

The boy stirred a bit and murmured feverishly, for his sleep was deep; but the man, thrilled to wakefulness, prayerfully touched his lips to her hair.

"Oh, mother's little lads!" he heard her whisper low as she framed the two dark heads in her arms. "Mother's little lads, you will never be lonely again!"



THE WINDOW

THERE is a painted window in the church, Where a tall angel stands out from the sky And shelters cherub children with his wings.

Now, one of these, the youngest and most shy, Is just my baby Giovanni's self;

The eyes are his and mouth that used to cling So closely to my breast a year ago—

Ah, me, was ever such a soft, warm thing!

I have no other picture of his face,
For we are poor, with scarce enough for bread;
So when the longing for him grows too sharp—
I have no child, you know, he being dead—
I leave my work and hurry to the church
To find him safe in that strong angel's care.
Then thank our Mary Mother, as I kneel.
For the sweet miracle that placed him there.

For it is Heaven's window that I see; It opens, and my child smiles down on me. EMILY SARGENT LEWIS.





P to the precise moment that Refugio Icarza, the muleteer, turned out of the patio of the cantina Ching-Chang-Chong into the Street of the Illus-

trious Men, somnolent peace had possessed that thoroughfare in all of its sunstruck jogs, steeps, windings, from its beginning in the plaza below to the point where it came to a precipitous ending on the tiptop of the Tehuantepec hills.

While dandling their babes in the dark doorways of painted adobes that made one long flame of the street, young brown mothers and girls had been busily engaged with the morning gossip, ripping and tearing reputations in quite a civilized manner. As, however, the muleteer made his way slowly downstreet, the clatter of tongues subsided, would have died altogether had it not been for the necessity that each of the gossips felt to hide her interest in the young man from her fellows. Withal, they might have kept silent, for each was betrayed by the soft glances that, meeting him approaching, followed after in a gleaming wake of admiration.

Now, though masculinity has gone at a premium in Tehuantepec ever since Don Porfirio killed off two-thirds of its suffrage in a single campaign, this soft homage was not alone due to the mere fact of his sex, for in any time and at any place Refugio would have been picked out of a crowd by an apprecia-

tive feminine eye. Above medium height; in fact, tall for the tropics where men range short, his charro suit of soft leather sat like his own skin on a trunk and limbs beautifully modeled and in perfect proportion. Under a huge silver-laced felt sombrero, his bronze face showed in golden dusk, the nose slightly aquiline, brows straight, the mouth fulllipped, all dominated by big Spanish eyes. whose exceeding amiability touched closely upon weakness. His smile, answering the greeting of an acquaintance, expressed the very essence of indolent good nature.

But all this granted—his beauty and absolute good humor—it has to be set down that his head carried no more of brains than were required to navigate these physical perfections around the world's sharp corners. As brains, however, were never indispensable to youth, he was the happier, perhaps, for their lack.

A golden Adonis, he swung along enjoying the sunlight and smiles, yet not upset by the latter. While not unaware of the soft glances and crivious eyes cast by many a girl at the armful of blossoms he carried, his simple mind was filled, just then, by the image of his novia, for whom he had picked them in the jungle outside the town.

At that hour she was always to be found tending her mother's stall on the market; and, turning presently out of the Street of the Illustrious Men. Re-

fugio found himself opposite the building, a huge, open affair, whose massive yellow pillars and red-tiled roof had been toned by the black-greens of time into harmony with the limes, laurels, and lemon trees that grew all over the

plaza.

Ever since, as aforesaid, Don Porfirio destroyed its balance of sex, the town's principal activities had fallen to the women, and already the crimson skirts and scarlet huipilitas of full half a thousand filled the dusky aisles between the pillars with red confusion. Yet out of it Refugio easily singled the vivid dot that represented Jacinta Camacho, and in another minute he had laid his flowers down among the painted gourds, Indian laces, embroidered huipilitas, and other knickknacks that covered her stand.

"A precious day, señor."

"Si, señorita," he answered her smiling greeting. "But not so precious as that on which you will come into my house."

"Thy house? Then there is a house forward—at last?" Though she smiled, a serious pucker in the very center of her smooth, dark brow emphasized the anxious note in her following question: "Then this time the wages are saved?"

Before he could open his mouth to speak, her smile faded, leaving the pucker in full command of her face, for his sudden, foolish look told plainly enough that the crux of their domestic problem, the few pesos required to set up even an Indian household, remained still unsolved. An employee of Chano, the arriero, whose mule trains ran all over the Tehuantepec Isthmus, Refugio had found once more the chicken fights and other temptations of wayside cantinas too strong for his good resolves.

"Not even a peso?"

Yet almost as he shook his head, the pucker was again wiped out by the smile, for her primitive philosophy had long ago taught her that it was natural for young fellows to spend as fast as they gained. Like all other girls who had succeeded in tying one up in the holy bonds, she would have to wait for a lucky coup, then haul him off to the

priest before the money could burn a hole in his pocket.

Also she felt special need for lenience. In a city famous, like Tehuantepec, all over Mexico for its handsome women, where, indeed, golden girls hung like ripe figs from every family tree, even a beauty might expect trouble in holding down her claim to the handsomest youth in the town; and, while some surreptitious white strain had raised Jacinta's bronze to a rich cream and shot her thick, dark hair with waves of brown, she knew herself for anything but that.

Though pretty enough in her own small way, she was quite unable to hold a candle to any one of half a dozen budding Venuses who were standing at that moment within a snail's crawl of her stall. Unable to realize herself the sweetness of manner and nature that had enslaved her lover, she had never been able to make out just why he had

chosen her from them all.

But as he had-well, she did not intend to take any chances; especially when Paz Garcia, who sold orchata and limon drinks at an outside stand, stood ready to gobble him up. And Paz was dangerous! Though a widow twice by death and desertion, she still lingered on the hither side of thirty, and, setting aside her vast experience in men, she was exceedingly skilled in the use of a luxurious figure and remarkably fine Jacinta had noted her handling of the eyes as Refugio passed her stand coming in to the market; and with Paz there, lying, as it were, like a sleek tigress in waiting for her foolish lamb, she was not likely to handle him with any but the lightest of gloves.

She smiled again while offering the

timid suggestion:

"If you stopped running with the mules and settled to a trade—even were it only to take up charcoal burning with thy father." And she withdrew it quickly when the sudden clouding of his face marked his distaste for the smut and dust of the ancestral craft. "Of course that would never do for thee." Twould be too great a comedown for a muleteer. But could one find a fit

occupation—such as porter in the house of the prefect or moso to the icfe?"

A white flash in the golden dusk of his sombrero told that she had hit, this time, on an agreeable note. To lazy it in the shade of some fine patio, with only an occasional errand to disturb one's flowery ease, was certainly preferable to swallowing the dust of some obstinate mule; and he agreed at once that "it would do." Whereupon—for such a revolutionary idea as that of a man hunting work had no place in her simple cosmogony—she took the task of finding him a suitable employment upon her own small shoulders.

"I shall have it ready against thy return from the next trip," she brightly assured him; and so fell to admiring his flowers, chattering happily till a sudden irruption of custom forced him to go

away.

As he went out of the market on the opposite side to that on which he had come in, and was therefore presumably safe from the stab of Paz Garcia's lively eyes, Jacinta plunged at once into business, and was so occupied for the next half hour that she did not see Paz scuttle around the end of the market to intercept him.

"And you would have gone without

a word to an old friend?"

Along with the question, Paz gave him a glance of tender reproach.

"But that is the way with you muleteers—clean spoiled by the girls of the trails."

Being now out of sight of Jacinta, it was not in Refugio's good-natured foolishness to reply to the complimentary implication by anything but an amiable grin. Encouraged whereby, Paz ran on:

"And the money you make? The pockets of you bursting with pesos. Soon you will have no need of us common folk. You will be marrying some

girl of the alta social."

"Si, I shall buy her with these." While the fatuous grin broadened, Refugio turned his pockets inside out. "Not a real for a lottery ticket, not a centavo to bet on a chicken, by the blessed saints! Not the price of a copa to keep me from dying of thirst."

"Tut! Tut!" After turning down certain sudden lights in her eyes, Paz again clucked her sympathy. "Tut! Tut! That is bad, for at noon the finest main of the year is to be fought in the patio of the Ching-Chang-Chong. Never were there two such cocks! Bravos, with records of killings. Santa Maria Marissima! How the blood and feathers will fly!"

"And what good to me?" He dejectedly touched his flapping pockets. "Hombre, hombre!" Once more Paz clucked her sympathy. "To think of it? A better of luck like thee? Ten pesos laid out at the odds against Pancho's cock would provide a housekeeping for Jacinta." But she will lend it, the

money?"

Now, as a matter of fact, it would have been impossible by sieving the town to have caught a better of worse judgment than Refugio. His present financial status, or, rather, the lack of one, was due to his unwise choice of the winner in a main fought in a small Indian town three days away on the Oaxaca trail. But that, of course, was an accident such as might happen to the shrewdest! To-day it would have been altogether different. He felt it, the luck, coming his way. If he had only the money! But he knew better than to ask Jacinta.

"No, señora." He shook his handsome, foolish head. "No, she would

not."

"No?" Paz's fine eyes expressed pained reprobation. In a flush of friendly indignation, she ran volubly on: "Then if she will not, I know one that will. Take thou this." While he was secreting the bill, she whisperingly added: "Place it at odds on Pancho's bird, and there will remain enough for the housekeeping after I am repaid. But, remember—Jacinta is to know nothing of it."

Refugio's guilty glance over his shoulder told how little fear there was of that; and, taking no more time than was barely required to express his thanks, he almost tiptoed it away; feeling, as he went, Jacinta's quiet eyes on his back. The sensation, of course,

rose altogether out of his own guilty consciousness, for not only was he out of her sight, but nearly half an hour passed before, emerging, as it were, from under a press of business, Jacinta happened to catch across the market the suppressed triumph in Paz Garcia's glance. It was so marked as to cause her uneasiness; which gave place to suspicious surprise when Paz suddenly crossed over and began to gossip, for theirs had never been more than a nodding acquaintance.

"They are telling it all over the market, señorita, that you and Refugio

are to go to the priest?"

Her position, leaning plump, folded arms on the edge of the stall, emphasized that shapely luxuriance of which she could have spared Jacinta a few golden pounds to their mutual advantage. Hating her for it, Jacinta still managed to reply with a certain stern sweetness:

"Not yet, señora. Refugio will needs

make another trip."

"Carambara!" Paz's hands rose in pretended wonder. "Out of such long saving must needs come the finest of housekeepings. You will be too rich to be seen, señorita."

Jacinta's delicate shoulders rose in

deprecation.

"Refugio has to live, señora, and one may not do it for nothing out on the trails."

"But there are always a few pesos

left over?"

Feeling without understanding the malicious humor below the question, Jacinta stiffened, replying with prim dignity: "Si, señora, always a few."

As Paz was called away just then to serve a thirsty customer, Jacinta did not see her sly smile; but she did both notice and wonder when Paz closed up her stand at noon—closed it in the very heat of midday, with the market burning amid the surrounding buildings like a huge red brick in a golden kiln, and folks left at their thirstiest without orchata, limonada, or other liquid surcease.

In an Indio town, where common folk are hard put at all times to bring both ends together by the hardest kind of stretching, such indifference to business transcended the wildest extravagance of city life; and, while Jacinta did not exactly interpret it as having any significance for herself, she could not but feel it to be sinister. While Paz was making her way across the plaza with her clay pots and vessels neatly balanced in a great gourd upon her head, Jacinta watched suspiciously till her swaying luxuriance was swallowed up in the Street of the Illustrious Men.

As a matter of fact, Paz had arranged her departure in order that she might catch Refugio as he came out from the chicken main. Moreover, she had timed it so nicely that, while still a block away, climbing the last steep between the rainbow adobes, she spied the rabble of peones and muchachos streaming out of the patio at the Ching-Chang-Chong. In front, a boy bore the bleeding corpse of that dead warrior, Pancho's bird; and, last of the procession and its sincerest mourner, Refugio walked behind.

"Ole, hombre! So the luck went

against thee?"

He had not seen her till she called, and then he glanced around as though minded to run, but paused as she exclaimed, with a laugh: "Ay de mi! My poor pesos!"

"Thou shalt be repaid——" he was beginning glumly, but she interrupted:

"Seguramente, but in thy own time, amigo. Paz Garcia was never the woman to press for a debt. If I had all that is owed me for refreshments? It should never be mentioned again. You lost all?"

"Every centavo—nothing left to buy a copa to drink damnation to that cursed

bird.'

"Pobre hombre!" She gave him soft eyes. "And this losing is thirsty work. But thou shalt not lack while I have a centavo in pocket. This will buy a copa for thee and thy mates."

At the clink of two pesos in his hand, the gloom under his hat was again riven by the flash of his teeth and eyes. She cut short his murmured thanks.

"It is nothing. After a dry trail, 'tis

only right that a man should wash out his throat."

"You, also, señora-"

But she drew herself up primly at the

very suggestion.

"Gracius, señor, but 'tis not for me, a woman, to be seen drinking with men in the street. But—two pesos will not go far in a crowd of muleteers, and if it should be that more is needed? One might take a little sip were it brought to her own house."

With this delicate hint, Paz swayed along upstreet, but paused at her own corner to cast back a glance that almost brought Refugio his death by reason of a thump in the back from a brother

muleteer.

"Hombrecita! Thou art her own little man. 'Twould never do for Jacinta to get wind of this. Were she five years younger and a quarter lighter, one might go farther and fare worse. As it is, her money rings good as the best.

Come, let us go back in."

It was also Magdaleno, the said muleteer, who retained sufficient of his senses some hours later to advise the investment of the last half peso in tequila on Paz's account; and, if his statement of her case falls short in refinement, it could not have been equaled for truth and force: "'Tis the wellfed cow that gives the most milk."

He himself accompanied Refugio to oversee the negotiations for a second loan; and, though a hard-bit fellow of thirty, who had followed the mules from the time he was tall enough to twist a tail, and had a correspondingly wide acquaintance with the eternally feminine, he was astounded by the ease with which Paz was persuaded to yield up not only the second, but a third, fourth, and fifth loans. Her complaisance not only transcended, but even reversed his experience; and his astonishment would have been the greater had he known the source from which that easy money flowed.

Of all a Tehuana's possessions, the chiefest is the necklace of gold coins which is at once the hoard, ornament, and heirloom of succeeding feminine generations. To break a link save for

the purpose of adding a coin constitutes almost a sacrilege; yet did Paz continue to snip off gold pieces with dark indifference during the two days Refugio dispensed free hospitality to his fellow muleteers at the Ching-Chang-Chong; and up to the moment that Chano, his employer, brought the most notable carouse in that hostelry's history to an end by ordering the mules out on the road, neither by word nor sign was her motive revealed. But, then—even upon their muddied consciousness it flashed out like a lightning bolt from a black night sky.

As is their usual ironical habit, the Fates, too, chose the most inappropriate moment and the most incongruous setting to deal the stroke. On the morning set for the train's departure, brilliant sunlight shone in over the red-tiled mule stables, and was reflected from the huge yellow walls of the patio in a flood of gold that fired bright zarapes, gilded Refugio's silver buttons, and filled the whole place with life and cheer.

While throwing ropes and cinching tight the packs, both he and Magdaleno paused often to ease their splitting heads; but, apart from this slight physical unease, Refugio was not distressed. For a man who had mortgaged in two days his earning for the next two months, he was even cheerful; and if he thought of Jacinta at all, any slight qualms were smothered by his elation at the prestige accruing from the magnificence of his late entertainment. He grinned broadly when Magdaleno asserted with a reminiscent chuckle that he. Refugio, had advanced the pace a notch for all muleteers.

In fact, he was fat and ripe in his folly for the thrust that let the wind out of his pride as he went to follow the mules out through the patio gates.

"You are leaving town, señor?" The question was propounded by a rural who stepped out from behind the wall.

"As you perceive, señor."

"Then you will please to be arrested."
"For—for what?" Refugio stammered.

"For a debt of thirty pesos owed by you to the Señora Paz Garcia."

Ill news can always be trusted to deliver itself, and the rumor of her novio's arrest reached Jacinta just as she opened her stall on the market. Closing it again, she hurried across the plaza and entered the administration building just in time to hear Paz make her charge in the icfe-politico's court.

"He comes to me, señor el jefe, this useless drunkard, with tales of a house-keeping he would set up with Jacinta Camacho; then when I lend it because of my great liking for the girl, he spends it, the pesos I am saving to build me a house of adobe, drinking with

wastrel muleteers."

The crafty wording of it left Refugio dumb, for if he could have found breath for speech, it would have been impossible to deny that some mention of housekeeping had passed at the first loan. As for the others—he might, for all that he knew to the contrary, have assured her of his intention to build a church. Moreover, he had caught Jacinta's eye as she hurried in; and, befogged as were his wits by liquor plus astonishment, he had sense enough to see that he would be best served with her by letting the charge alone.

"So 'twas for me you did it?" Her eyes spoke it quite plainly. "Then never

mind."

And, reassured as to the motive, she proceeded to fight for him with all of

her simple powers.

"'Tis a fie, señor el jefe!" she called out. "'Twas not for my housekeeping that she lent him her pesos, but in order that she might entrap and take him for her own. She has been throwing her fat at him these many months."

Though taken by surprise, for she had not seen the girl come in, Paz shook the charge off her large golden shoul-

ders.

"'Twill not make sense, señor el jefe. How should I entrap him by lending the pesos for him to marry with her? Threw my fat,' sayest thou? 'Thy flesh is too heavy,' said the crow to the ox. 'Why do you not try to look like me?' But here is the proof. If she wants him, let her take him—in exchange for my thirty pesos."

"But—" But the jcfc cut off the argument with a heavy frown. A fat, brown Spaniard, in whom a natural tendency toward biliousness had been aggravated by last night's tequila, his sole desire was to be rid of the case.

"Such a to-do about a fool peon," he growled. "If the señora's intention toward him be as you say, still might one count it a good riddance. But on that the law has nothing to say. It merely asks—can you pay?"

From Refugio, who shook his head,

his glance moved to Jacinta. "Nor you, señorita?"

But she, poor girl, had trouble enough to keep the tiger that, in Tehuantepec, takes the place of the traditional wolf away from her mother's door. There was never a cent for hoarding left over from her small means.

"Then," he concluded, when she also had shaken her head, "if the Señora Garcia has a service in which to use him, there remains only to apprentice him to work out the full amount of the loan at the customary wage of half a

peso a day."

"And trust me to find the service." Paz answered his questioning look. "I shall put him to making brick, and if she get not a house in exchange for the pesos, 'twill not be the fault of Paz Garcia. Here, señor, is the note in payment of the indenture. Let it be made out at once, for I ache to see him at work."

While the jcfc's clerk was scribbling hard on the papers, Jacinta poured con-

solations into Refugio's ear.

"Do not look so sad, querido. 'Twill be hard, of course, the labor, but see—every day I shall see thee as I go past her house, and when it is finished—the task—I shall have a fine place ready for thee."

And Refugio, in whom the thought of hard labor had injected deep repentance, replied in kind: "Si, lindita, and when I am once placed, never again will I bet on a chicken or touch drink."

Paz's house—or jacal, rather, for it was merely a hut thatched with palm fronds and sided in with ribs of the same—stood with its garden inside a prickly fence of tall organos at the very end of the Street of the Illustrious Men. Situated on the edge of the jungle, whose verdant growths threatened at all times to inundate it with a flood of greenery, and pleasantly shaded by cocoa palms and bananas, it was a miniature Eden; and there, like the first man, Refugio came under the curse of labor.

After a heavy day quarrying adobe to mix with chopped grass and water for the big, square bricks, his repentance was heartfelt if no more sincere. Though he had stripped down to manta trousers, the legs of which were also rolled up till the garment resembled a breechclout, the sweat ran in runnels from every golden crease, and splashed into the liquid mud as he leveled it in the frames. The heat and labor, moreover, had been rendered more trying by his thoughts of Chano and Magdaleno journeying in the deep shade of scented jungles, and Paz had added the last straw by delivering little homilies on his luck in falling into her hands from where she lolled at her ease in the shade of the jacal eaves.

"Here you will learn steady habits," she told him once. Again: "For once thy labor will turn a profit that goes elsewhere than into the till of a cantina even if it fall short of thy pocket." And calling him in at sundown, she concluded the series with a stubborn truth: "I could have sold thy debt to a labor contractor, who would have placed thee with the tobacco factories where they drive their men with stripes and curs-

ings into an early grave."

Judging from the glum look Refugio returned to her counsels, it is to be feared that he hardly appreciated his advantages; but his face brightened when, on entering the jacal, he saw a quart bottle of Toluca and a pack of cigarettes flanking savory dishes of rice, goat's milk, and enchilados. But the hand that clutched at the bottle instantly dropped when Paz called from her seat in the doorway: "The beer and cigarettes are extra, señor. 'Tis for you to use them or not."

He took a drink from the clay water pitcher instead. But it lacked the sharp tang of the beer; and, without turning her head, Paz presently heard the pop of a cork and the following gurgle. Alas for Refugio's good intentions! With beer at four reals the quart, and cigarettes in proportion, he rose from the meal twelve centavos deeper in debt.

Just then he recked little of consequences. Utterly worn out, drugged with food and drink, he went quietly into the small adobe outhouse where Paz locked him in to sleep. Not till he was awakened next morning by the pain of his strained muscles did he begin to accuse himself. Bending once more over the bricks, he swore to new resolves-which were confirmed and strengthened by a fleeting glimpse of Jacinta through the fencing organos as she passed on her way to market. At the noon meal, he curtly refused liquid extras, contenting himself with the cigarettes that were left over from last night's feast. So, until late in the afternoon did he live strictly in the letter of his intention; then the heavy labor under the furnace blast of the sun began to sap his resolution along with his strength. At supper-but why waste time in the recital of events which duplicate those of the preceding and succeeding evenings? Sufficient that, instead of being lessened, as Jacinta fondly thought, by three and a half at the end of the week, his debt was increased by another peso.

And now that she was fairly assured of his remaining in debt, Paz began to change her tactics, lightening his labors with periods of ease. Quite frequently she would call him from the bricks to smoke a cigarette with her in the shade; and, while giving him the full benefit of her fine eyes at close range, she would chatter pleasantly about the town's small gossip. And always she attended very carefully to his wants, cooking his favorite dishes, washing his clothing, bearing herself, in fact, throughout like a woman who, having had two husbands, is determined to catch her third. And having, in the course of another week, thawed his first cold sullenness,

she did not hesitate to give him a clew

to her thoughts.

"With a proper start and the right woman to help thee along," she told him one morning, "a lad of thy parts should go far. Jacinta? She is good, but even if the old woman, her mother, did not hang like a millstone around her neck, she is not of thy sort. Thy need is for a woman of experience that has a few pesos in store. 'Tis a shame to have thee twisting the tails of another man's mules that should be driving a train of thy own."

Up to that time, he had shown little interest in her plannings, but now his quick glance evidenced an even mixture

of interest and distrust.

"And where should one find her, this wise woman?"

Her shameless glance informed him more than her words:

"For what did thy mother provide

thee with eyes?"

For the remainder of that day, at least, he made good use of them. The very stealth of the glances with which he measured and weighed her during his spells of rest under the eaves betrayed the impression her words had made; and, if only through usage, he came back from each survey with a slightly lessened revulsion.

Not that he was shaken in his love for Jacinta. But it is not in the careless, indolent peon nature to endure, for long, physical discomfort. Thrown into the scale along with pains and aches of his labors, Paz's fine eyes would be sufficient to drop the beam in spite of her overripeness. Jacinta had real cause for the alarm that thrilled her when the tale of these tête-à-têtes was brought to her at market.

"Already she has her claws in him, the cat!" so the rumor ran. "If Jacinta have not a care, she will lose her pretty

mouse."

To which one sympathizer—in whom Paz had unwisely confided during a boastful moment—added the still more terrifying information that, instead of lessening, Refugio was steadily gaining in debt.

In less than one minute after she

received this news, Jacinta scuttled out of the market, and those who saw her face as she went out would not have given in exchange for Paz Garcia's life a mess of yesterday's fish. The girl's soft spirit, Lowever, did not set that way. Hurrying around the corner, she turned into the Church of the Angels, where, as it were, she placed her brief for the defense in the hands of those saints and saintesses who take a particular interest in the affairs of lovers; then, quietly confident that something now must come out of it, she rose from her knees before the altar to go back to her stall.

And something did come out of it. Let scoffers sneer; but the fact remains that, in passing out of the door, she was stopped by Padre Gordia, the officiating priest, who was coming in to perform the offices.

"What is it, niña?" he asked, arrested

by the acute misery of her face.

From her first prattlings, all her confessions had been poured into his kind old ear, and she required no further encouragement to unbosom her troubles. Judged by standards of pure reason, they were, of course, dreadfully absurd. She would have been far better off, as the priest well knew, without her handsome prodigal; but then—the same was to be said of all peonas. The eternal verities, reason and truth, cut no figure in their loves; and Jacinta would be no different from any other peona who worked and slaved for her man. Nor was Refugio any worse, perhaps a little better, than the average peon. Setting aside his beauty, he was just as good as she was likely to get, and, knowing it, the padre lent a sympathetic ear.

"So 'tis a husband she needs more than a house?" he commented on Paz's tactics. "And nothing will suit her taste

but thy novio? Well, well!"

"Si, padre," she answered, with naïveté that overlooked the fact of his sex. "And I am afraid she will get him, for all men, as thou knowest, are the greatest of fools."

"If you had been married when he came in from the trail," he mused, "then would she never have caught him."

"Si," she mournfully agreed. "But he had gambled all of his wage, and I am always at pains to keep my mother in meat. Where should one have gotten the fee?"

"That might have been managedhad I known. A moso is needed in the priest's house, and he could have worked it out." Giving her a look whose keenness belied his words, he slowly added: "'Tis not, of course, for the church to interfere with the law in its course, but-could he be gotten as far as this church?" Moving slowly away, he repeated it over his shoulder: "Si, we have need of a good moso, and could he be gotten as far as the church, why, then-

Usually the peon mind is slow at taking meanings, but, sharpened as the girl's wits were by distress, he had no more than passed out of sight in the gloom of the church before she understood. But sudden gloom extinguished

the lights of hope.

"Si, if he could be gotten as far as the church? But Paz will never let him out of her sight-no, not by so much as the jump of a flea. Santissimo Trinidad! 'Twould need a miracle.'

Nevertheless, her despondency formed, after all, a forcing bed for the seeds of hope. From the church she proceeded by a roundabout way to climb up to the jungle behind Paz's housewhere, undoubtedly in reward for her simple faith, the saints were already

preparing the "miracle."

For on this particular morning Refugio had arisen with his natural distaste for labor raised by despair to the exact point where it balanced his resistance to Paz's scheme. While upending the bricks he had made the preceding day for their better drying, he studied the plump face and unmistakable amplitudes of his bondmistress for the thousandth time, and, in view of his increasing debt and never-ending labors, pronounced them at least endurable.

As aforesaid, he was swinging in such delicate balance that it required the merest trifle to turn the scale; and this was added when, on moving out from under the eaves after a spell of

rest, he felt the furnace blast of the sun strike full on his head and neck. Just as Jacinta cautiously peeped at him from the jungle, he dropped the brick he had picked up and walked back to Paz under the eaves.

"Supposing one were minded to

marry-what of those?"

He nodded, backward, at the bricks. "One's husband cannot be one's debtor." Though Jacinta missed the words. Paz's fat smile caused her to clench her nails. "In any case, there are enough for Pablo, the mason, to build us a house with a patio and stable for mules.'

"And the mules?" he pursued. "Mules for the train? They are not to be had for nothing these days."

Stepping inside, Paz brought out from the cedar chest that held her fiesta wear the remains of her neck chain. Of Spanish doubloons, German eagles, British guineas, and various other coinage, there remained more than enough to fortify her answer.

"Three mules-for a beginning. More can be bought as the business

grows."

The distance was too great for Jacinta to catch either his "Sta 'ueno, it is good!" or Paz's joyful exclamation, "Now, indeed, thou art my own little man!" But it was easy for her to see by the widow's broad smile that something out of the ordinary was afoot. Out of the following talk, too, a vagrant zephyr brought her Paz's closing remark.

"Nay, queredita! I have been at too great pains to lime my bird to take any chances. You must stay here. In any case, 'tis near the hour of the siesta, and a sleep will freshen thee after the labor. While you rest, I shall run and speak

for the priest."

With small, roguish pats and little shoves that set Jacinta tingling, Paz herded him back to the outhouse. Next came the click of the huge Spanish padlock which, with chain and staple, held the door. Then, by craning from her covert, Jacinta was able to watch Paz and her amplitudes go quivering, what

of her haste, down the Street of the Illustrious Men.

After her rival had dropped out of sight below the first steep, Jacinta slid through a break in the organos, and paused, glancing cautiously around. As Paz had said, it was the hour of the siesta. The whole quarter dozed under the burning noon sun. There was no one to see her run forward and dig the staple out of the door jamb with one

furious pry of her knife.

Refugio, who had already lain down, rose as the door swung, and, while smothering his surprised cry "Jacinta!" with one small brown hand, she poured her news into his ear. And he required little persuasion. At the sight of her, the scale that held Paz and her mules bumped, despite their solidity, against the beam, and, being possessed in full by the peon's natural preference for the line of least resistance; he agreed at once to her plan. His single objection was not put forward until they were hotfooting it down a back street.

"But will she not entrap me again

after the marriage?"

In spite of her hurry, Jacinta found time to proudly toss her head.

"The mozo to the priests? No, señor, the padre will see to that."

Meanwhile, Paz was pursuing her own visions toward an unexpected re-First she went to her own church, which happened to be situated on the opposite side of the town, and where, having sufficiently punished Refugio for his folly, the Fates were preparing to heap confusion upon the head of her, their agent in his undoing. The priest of this, the first of three churches she visited in succession, had just gone out to shrive a dying man; the priest of the second had been taken suddenly sick; and when she turned, at last, into the Church of the Angels, she was informed by the sacristan that the Padre Gordia was even then engaged in the celebration of a nuptials.

"But sit down, señora," he said.
"Twill soon be over, and then the padre will talk with thee.'

Nothing loath, for she was over-

heated by her long walk in the hot sun, Paz took a seat in the back of the church that gave her a good view of the party at the altar. Though the bride and groom were kneeling before the priest with their backs toward her, she could see even at the distance and in the dim dusk of the church that they did not belong to the alta social. For not only were they unattended, but, while the woman was wearing the usual crimson shawl and skirt of a peona, the man was dressed in old soiled manta.

In view of the fact that-unless for some special reason such as her ownthe common folk of the town usually consummated their unions without the aid of a priest. Paz rather wondered that two of their weddings should fall on one day. But she was too busy with her own visionings to give the coincidence more than a passing thought.

While she sat there, thinking, planning, it is to be feared that her inward communings were hardly in correspondence with her sacred surroundings. From a niche in the wall, Refugio's handsome face gazed down upon her from the plaster body of St. Anthony, of Padua. Again it shone in all the glories of stained glass out of the aureole that really belonged to St. Thomas. In fact, she saw it so often, everywhere she looked, that she had to rub her eyes when, presently, she saw it coming down the aisle upon the shoulders of the newly married peon.

"Si, 'tis I." Grinning sheepishly, her late bondsman replied to her question.

"But-I left thee at home-under lock and key."

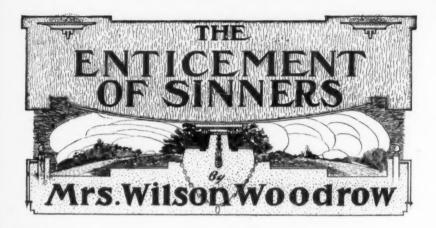
"And now is he here-married to

The soft triumph of Jacinta's face switched the current of Paz's feeling. "But he is still in my debt, señora,"

she snapped. "What of my pesos? He must come with me."

But those uncompromising Fates had denied her even revenge. With a glance at the padre who was now coming down the aisle, Jacinta returned prim answer:

"Refugio is now moso to the priests. You will be repaid, señora, from the first of his wage."





LL the romantic and exciting events in life do not invariably occur in the aristocratic circles where fiction is prone to enshrine them. Take, for

instance, the case of Rosie Keenan, the pretty maid of the fascinating Mrs. Seth Ellery, famous, you remember, for her collection of jewels, including that string of diamonds which—but I anticipate.

To begin, then, properly at the beginning: It was one of those evenings when Mrs. Ellery, whose friends said that she was bridge mad, excitement mad, admiration mad, was away from home, as usual, and Mr. Ellery, also, as usual, was spending his evening in meditation and reading in the library. Therefore, what more natural than that Rose, after the arduous labors of arraying her mistress and affixing tiaras, and cabauchons, and ropes, and chains, and sunbursts, should slip away to spend an hour or two in relaxing gossip with a friend of hers, Biddy Winn, who was cook in one of the big, gray houses a block or two away from the Ellery mansion?

But Biddy was in no mood for the frivolities of conversation. She sat in her pleasant kitchen that mild night early in May looking very serious, indeed, as she studied a paper with a most imposing row of black headlines which was spread out on her knees.

"Tis terrible news this." She shook her head dolefully as Rose entered.

"What?" cried Rose, stopping short in the doorway, her hand on her heart.

"This paper says that a well-known as-trol-o-ger"—spelling out the word—"has pre-dict-ed that the whole city will be destroyed by an earthquake on the evening of June fifth, to be followed immediate by devastating flames; and then, mind you, to make destruction more secure, a tidal wave will submerge the city."

"But not this part," cried Rose, "Not Petunia Place, the finest residence part of the town?"

"Everywhere," said Biddy Winn, with unctuous solemnity. "It is fine that Donovan Kelly can swim, for he will be thinking of nothing but saving me. Who will be saving you, Rosie?"

"I do' know," sighed the girl forlornly, with a little break in her voice, for, although she was as pretty as a picture, with brown hair tumbling down her white neck, eyes bluer than the sky, with unbelievably long lashes, and the bloom of the wild rose on her cheeks, she had never a sweetheart. There was no accounting for it. It may have been due to some dainty fastidiousness or

caprice on her part, but the fact remained.

"Well," said Biddy heavily, "I'd leave no stone unturned to find myself a gos-

soon before June fifth."

"I-I-think I'll be going now, and, after I get Mrs. Ellery's clothes put away, I'll be offering a prayer to St. Joseph."

Rose caught up her cape, and, without waiting to say good night, slipped

through the door.

It was one of those nights in the early spring when the little bow of the moon is very shy, and contents herself with just peeping from behind the soft, trailing clouds, and a soft, little wind carries the scent of the freshly upturned earth and the springing plants. And perhaps you know how pretty it is in Petunia Place when the young leaves are just coming out on the big trees that arch the gay awnings. But as Rose ran along, looking neither to the right nor left, she stopped suddenly, for from somewhere, she could not tell the direction, there came floating to her a little song, faint, and gay, and sweet.

"A kiss, and a song, and the good red wine, And thy heart in my heart, oh, maid of mine! Roses and laughter, a song and a jest, God gave us summer, the devil the rest."

Rose stood listening a moment, with upturned face and parted lips, then she looked about her curiously, but nothing was to be seen but her own shadow and a stray cat or so running home close to the wall. Then, again, out of nowhere, it seemed, but very far away now:

"Sunshine, and summer, and joy set free. Youth lives eternal in you and me.

"'Tis the Good People!" gasped Rose. "'Tis some trick they're after playing

on me!"

And with that she ran home as fast as she could. Just in time, too, for, as she slipped in at the back door, Mrs. Ellery's car whirled up the drive. When, a moment later, Rose made her demure appearance in the hall, the lady stood, her foot on the lowest step of the stair and her dark, gem-starred head turned over her shoulder, as, with some surprise, she regarded her husband.

Mr. Ellery, evidently astonished at this early home-coming, had just emerged from the library, an open book in his hand, and now stood before her, tall and imperturbable, his gravely ques-

tioning gaze upon her face.

"I came home early," she explained indifferently. "I caught the heel of my slipper on a step and nearly pulled it off, so dancing was out of the question." She yawned behind her hand. "I don't know what I'm going to do with the rest of the evening, and I haven't even a new novel for a nightcap."

"What a misfortune!" he said, in satirical sympathy. "I fear that I can suggest no agreeable alternative. I can but offer such poor solaces as a library,

books, and my own society.'

She leaned toward him over the banister, and lifted her eyes with deliberate coquetry to his.

"What would you say if I should accept them—temporarily?"

He raised his brows in evident surprise; but there was no softening of his eyes nor any warmth in his cool tones.

"I should be tempted to murmur one word-caprice. My experience of your ennui upon other occasions when an unkind fate has doomed you to spend an evening alone with me doesn't tempt me to regard the prospect with enthu-

"You are so abominably self-sufficient," she cried petulantly. "Don't you ever want to get away from yourself,

to be amused and diverted?"

"I have never had the least desire to pursue a meaningless and unending chase of butterflies," he said stiffly.

A quick storm darkened her eyes for a moment, then it passed, and her face was alive with that elfish mischief which was one of her many fascinations.

"I'd rather be a butterfly with lovely, gauzy wings"-she lifted the skirts of her blue and rose chiffon coat and waved her arms-"than to be a tiresome bookworm. Wouldn't you?"

Then, without waiting for his answer, she turned away, insolently forgetful of his presence, and went on up the stairs, singing some gay little melody under her breath.

Rose, who had withdrawn to a discreet distance during this colloquy between the two, now made haste to follow, and, after assisting her mistress to make her preparations for the night, she, too, crept to bed, but not to sleep; for one moment she was shivering with apprehension at the prospect of Biddy Winn's predictions being fulfilled, and the next she was hearing again that rich voice through the trees and wondering

to whom it might belong.

The result was that it was barely dawn when she crept down the stairs to the dark, empty, silent first floor. It was, of course, too early for her to open up the house, so she opened the hall door very softly, and ran down through the lawn to the gardens. It was the first lovely hush of the morning, cool and fresh, with the birds just beginning to wake and twitter in their

"If," said Rose, getting down on her hands and knees and peering among the dew-wet flowers, "I could be catching the one of the Good People that played the trick on me last night, I'd give him a pinch between me thumb and forefinger that would punish him for fool-

ing me."

But the words were scarcely out of her mouth, when, as if in mockery of her rash statement, she heard again:

"A kiss, and a song, and the good, red wine-

But this time the sound was so real, and human, and near that Rose was up from her knees in a jiffy, gazing over the hedge; and there, so close that she could have put out a finger and touched him, was a tall, straight, dark young fellow training sweet-pea vines over a trellis, and singing as happily as the birds in the tree above him.

For a moment he and she stood gazing at each other in mutual astonishment: but he was not the sort of a youth to let such an opportunity slip by him, so he came straight up to the hedge, and stood looking down upon Rose with something in the depths of his halflaughing, half tender gray eyes which seemed to say: "If you don't untangle your evelashes and look at me, and take your mouth out of curl, I will not be responsible for what happens on an erratic impulse,"

"Was it you who were singing last night?" faltered Rose, at last, thought it might be one of the Good

People, maybe."
"It was me," he said, "Derry Sulli-And do you be living yonder, right next to me?" waving his hand toward the house, standing big, and gray, and imposing in the morning sunlight.

"Yes," answered Rose. "I do be living there come Whitsuntide, three years

back.'

There was a quick flash across his

"With the beautiful Mrs. Ellery, one of the best amateur experts on jewels?"

"I do' know about that," said Rose doubtfully; "but you're right when you do be calling her beautiful. She's tall and slender as a willow wand, with black hair like a cloud, and big, dark eves. She says she hasn't a drop of Irish blood in her veins; but 'tis hard to believe that, for she's so gay, and so sad, and so sweet, and so sharp.

So Derry Sullivan neglected his gardening and Rose her morning occupations, and they stood chatting across the hedge, until at last Rose came to herself

with a guilty start.

"Oh!" she cried. "However did the sun be getting way up there? Why, 'tis hours we must have been talking here."

"Sure the sun must be playing a joke on us," said Derry, "for the clock in me mind says it hasn't been ten minutes.'

"Listen!" exclaimed Rose, as a bell sounded in the distance. "She wishes her breakfast. She always has me to serve it to her myself." And with a parting wave of her hand she was off.

But when she entered the dining room a little out of breath, the expected reproof was not forthcoming, for Mr. Ellery, looking up from his paper, had just asked his wife a question which had aroused her rather indifferent atten-

"Marcia," he said, "are you still keeping your jewels in that miserable little safe in your bedroom?"

She nodded, and, leaning her chin on her hand, asked with some interest:

"Why?"

"Because there have been a series of rather significant burglaries in this locality lately. A week ago the Watkins' house was entered, and Mrs. Watkins' emeralds were taken, and'"—referring to his paper—"last night Henderson's house was broken into, but nothing of value was taken because Mr. Henderson and his brother returned unexpectedly and apparently frightened them away. Far be it from me to dictate, but under the circumstance, do you not think it would be the part of wisdom to take your rather large collection to the bank this morning?"

"But in your estimation," she said, with her light, provoking laugh, "I never do take the part of wisdom."

He looked up at her with a smile, a charming smile that softened his cold eyes and transfigured his whole face.
"It is never too late to mend."

In spite of herself and to her own vast annoyance, Mrs. Ellery's cheeks flushed and her lashes drooped. It was with an effort that she recovered herself.

"Very well," she said, in her usual lazy tone, "consider me and my ways mended. Are you going? Good-by." She turned up a perfunctory cheek for

him to kiss.

Rose paid small heed to this conversation, her mind was so taken up by the new gardener next door, and it must be confessed that her duties suffered because of this mental preoccupation.

And it was strange how often the girl found an errand that led her near the box hedge, now to get a breath of air, now some flowers for her mistress.

"Rose," said Derry—it had got as far as that when they were taking a moonlight stroll a week later, "isn't it strange that you and me should be finding each other? It looks like the hand of destiny for sure."

"What's that?" she asked; and then, without waiting for an explanation, added confidently: "But, anyways, I

know why you came."

"You do?" he said, with one of his

quick glances; and it seemed to her that his voice had changed in some way. "Rosie, what do you be meaning by that?"

"I know," laughing and looking up

at him from under her lashes.

"You know—what?" he said, almost fiercely and very low. "Why you're come," still laughing.

"Then you'll tell me," speaking in the same tone and stopping short in the

path. "Now, why?"

"Why, you've come"—she looked up at him sweetly—"to save me from the earthquake, and the fire, and the tidal wave which some thinks is to destroy the city on June fifth, which is to-morrow night."

He stood there looking at her, his expression changing with every word she spoke. Then the tenderness of his eyes flooded her until she tangled her eyelashes up after her custom on her scarlet cheeks.

"Tell me, Rose," he said, after a moment's silence, "do you be thinking that I could commit a mortal sin like—like—

stealing, for instance?"

"Surely not," she cried vehemently.
"I know you would steal nothing unless"—the corners of her mouth curling up—"it was a heart here and there."

"A heart here or a heart there does not interest me," said Derry Sullivan.

"It is but one heart I want."

"Speaking of thieves," said Rose, changing the subject quickly, "the master says the neighborhood is full of them." She shivered and looked over her shoulder. "He told the mistress only a few days ago that she was to take her jewels to the bank."

"And has she not done so?" he asked.
"Indeed she has not. She is very forgetful, is Mrs. Ellery." Then she sighed a bit. "This may be the last walk we'll ever take. To-morrow is the

day of the earthquake."

"Think no more of it," he cried gayly.

"Am I not here to save you?"

If one might judge by appearances, there was no presage of impending destruction in the dawning of the next day, so sparkling, and shimmering, and blue, and gold, and green was it that it

looked as if the world were just beginning instead of drawing near an end. And the afternoon was like the morning, and the evening like them both. When the sun was setting in a sky of glass, Rose was just putting the last finishing touches to Mrs. Ellery's toilet, and that lady was taking a final glance at herself in the long mirror, when she turned, arrested by a sudden thought.

"Rose," she said, "tell Mr. Ellery when he comes in that I will not be here for dinner. I have decided to motor over to the Seftons to dine and play bridge." She hesitated a moment, frowning a little. "I forgot to take my jewels to the bank either yesterday or to-day, so I'm wearing my pearls. I'm loaded with as many jewels as I can possibly adorn myself with for so small an occasion; and now I hardly know what to do." She bit her lip and looked annoved. "The lock is almost off the safe. It is in worse condition than Mr. Ellery thinks. Of course, in view of these recent burglaries, it was stupid of me not to have taken the things to the bank, so I'm going to ask you, Rose, if you'll just pin this little bag of rings and pins to your corset, and slip this necklace inside your frock.'

She lifted from the dressing table a small chamois bag, which she held out to the maid, and then took up a diamond necklace like great drops of dew

strung on a thread.

"Oh, no'm!" cried Rose, shrinking back. "Don't be askin' it of me, please.

I-I-I'd be afraid."

"Nonsense!" said her mistress impatiently. "Appreciate the compliment. I would intrust them to no one else. Here, open your collar, and I will clasp them around your neck, to be sure that they are fastened securely."

"But," Rose still protested, "you may never be seeing me again, ma'am, for there's many a one saying that the world do be coming to an end to-night. Have ye not heard, the city is to be destroyed by an earthquake, burned by fire, and sunk in the depths of the sea?"

"In that case," returned Mrs. Ellery, laughing, "I shall not be concerned over the fate of my necklace." And she

snapped the clasp around Rose's neck. "There"—with a sigh of relief—"now see that you tell no one of this; and, above all things, don't get silly ideas about earthquakes and burglars. The house is full of servants. Mr. Ellery will soon be here. So do not go out, but take a book and read."

"Yes, ma'am." Rose's tone was very meek and frightened as she threw a scarf over Mrs. Ellery's head and put

a long cloak about her.

For a time after her mistress' departure, the maid had too much to do to think very much about the jewels which lay hard and cold as hailstones about her throat; but, after attending to her various duties, she felt a desire for companionship, and, seeking it, discovered to her dismay that every other servant in the house had taken advantage of the situation to enjoy a surreptitious evening out, and that, with the exception of Mr. Ellery, who was, as usual, shut up in his library, she was entirely alone in the house. Then, indeed, her heart sank down to her shoes.

But by virtue of a previous understanding, she was expecting and hoping to hear Derry Sullivan's step every moment, so she took a book and tried to read until he came. But this proved a much too placid employment for one in her excited frame of mind. One moment she would shiver and tremble, thinking she felt the first heave of the earthquake, and the next she would run to the mirror and pull out the necklace, no brighter, after all, than her eyes; and would sigh:

"'Tis terrible becoming they are. I

wish he could see me now.'

But time went on, and, in spite of her acute listening, Rose heard no footsteps on the porch, so that it was not to be wondered at that she gave a faint scream when she looked up suddenly to see Derry Sullivan standing before her in one of the long windows.

"Oh!" she cried. "You scared the breath out of me." Then, as he did not reply: "You're late," she pouted.

"'Tis true, I am," he said, laughing a little and coming farther into the room. But, in spite of his laughter, Rose noticed that he looked both tired

and worried.

"But you'll forgive me, won't you?" he coaxed, taking her hands. "For I'm not lacking a good excuse. I have been resisting the enticements of sinners for the last hour."

"The enticements of sinners!" she repeated after him. "What were they after having you do? Get drunk?"

He laughed again, and shook his

head.

"I will tell you of the circumstances," he said. "I had known these sinners when I was a boy and before they started in their present path. have been after me for a long time to earn my living the same as they do. They thought I was fitted for it fine, for I think quick and act quick. I am light as a cat on my feet, and 'tis nothing I know of that I fear. The long chances tempt me every time. Now, truth to tell, they had almost got me." His face sobered now, and darkened. "My present job was but a blind, for the sinners had showed me a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, and all I had to do was to climb for it."

"It is not climb you mean," said Rose, in her matter-of-fact way. "It is dig."

"Surely," with a humorous glance. "And then I met you." His face softened, his hands clasped hers. "And then I knew I couldn't go on with it, and so I told the sinners to-night. It was a long argument, I can tell you."

"I'm glad you paid no heed to them," said Rose, with a sigh of content.

"Are you glad?" he asked, leaning forward the better to look into her eyes. "Rose, listen well to me, and answer from your heart. Suppose I would now get the pot of gold, for I know well where I could lay my hands on it, and the sinners don't, to their sorrow; and once ours and another one or two like it, you should wear silks, and satins, and gold, and diamonds for all the rest of your life. Would you like it?"

"Wouldn't I, though?" cried the girl, with shining eyes, her hand touching the stones about her neck under her frock.

"What's that?" said Derry suddenly, bending his ear and listening.

"I heard nothing," she answered.

"I thought I did."

He walked over to the window and looked out, peering about him in the darkness. Then, apparently satisfied, he came back and sat down.

"But, Rose," taking up the thread of his talk where he had dropped it, "suppose, in securing the pot of gold, I'd be imperiling not only my freedom, but my

immortal soul as well?"

"Then, in the name of all the saints," she cried, alarmed, "leave the pots of gold go, but," dropping her earnestness and looking up at him with a saucy gleam in her eyes, "you needn't be thinking that I never wear diamonds."

She drew out the hidden necklace, and showed it to him sparkling against

her black frock.

"Holy powers!" He fell back a step or two. "What is this? Where did you get them?" His voice had been low and strained, but now it trembled a little. "I won't, I can't believe-"

"What?" she asked, lifting her inno-

cent eyes to his.

"Nothing." He drew a long breath, and smiled at her. "But where-

"The mistress," she began, but got no further, for there was a rush of feet outside; and then, through the long, French windows, there stepped two policemen, with Mr. Ellery just behind them, looking surprised and rather cynically interested.

"Caught with the goods on," said one of the men, pointing to the necklace sparkling against Rose's black frock.

In the excitement of the moment, none of them had heard the motor stop; but Mrs. Ellery, who had just stepped from it, must have apprehended that something unusual was happening, for, before the maid had a chance to make any explanation, her mistress threw open the door of the servants' sitting room and entered.

"In pity's name," she cried, looking from one to another of the group before her, "what is the meaning of this?"

She turned to her husband for an explanation.

"About an hour after dinner," he replied, "I had a telephone from the police station, stating that two suspicious characters had been arrested for loitering about the place. They protested their own innocence, but said that they had seen a well-known burglar enter the house, and I was informed that two policemen were on their way to make a thorough search of the premises. They arrived almost immediately, and we went over the house to find the lock on your safe broken, and the safe itself completely empty. The rest of the story remains to be told."

He waved his hand in the direction of Derry and Rose, with that faint, cynical smile just showing about the cor-

ners of his mouth.

"It is not surprising that you found the safe empty," said his wife, "considering that most of its contents adorned me. I felt like the Queen of Sheba at

a mothers' meeting."

"I thought at first," said Mr. Ellery, "that, as the safe was empty, you might possibly have regarded my request and taken the jewels to the bank, but"—and again he indicated Rose and Derry with a slight gesture—"this does not seem to confirm that theory."

The lady turned to Derry.

"Are you the expert burglar that the suspicious characters have made you out

to the police?"

How he conveyed to her the fact of his temptation it is impossible to tell, by the flicker of an eyelash, a twist of the mouth, perhaps; but what he said was:

"My friends the suspicious characters would have hard work to prove it, ma'am. I am Mr. Watterson's gardener, with the highest recommenda-

tions."

His face was white and set like a rock; but he answered bravely.

Mrs. Ellery turned to the maid, who was sobbing as if her heart would break. "My little Rose," she said, "do you

think he is a burglar?"

"No, no, no!" cried the girl, and

flamed like a little tigress.

Mrs. Ellery laughed and shrugged her white shoulders. "There's faith for you," she said to her husband.

He looked at her earnestly.

"It is said that it can remove mountains," he said. "Do you believe it?"

Under his gaze, the color rose in her cheeks and her eyes drooped; but before she could answer one of the officers broke in impatiently:

"What shall I do? Whether the man's a thief or not, the girl's one. Shall I take the pair to the station

house?"

"One moment," said Marcia Ellery, stepping in between the policeman and the trembling, shrinking maid, and speaking again to her husband. "I fastened this necklace around Rose's throat myself before I left this evening, and I also gave her a bag of pins and rings to wear inside her gown until I returned. I'm afraid the suspicious characters sent these officers on a wild-goose chase. Please tell them to go."

She swept from the room, and her husband, after conferring a moment or two with the departing policemen, fol-

lowed her.

She stood in the dimly lighted hall leaning against the newel post. Under his gaze, the color again stained her cheek, and her eyes fell. Then, as if summoning all her courage, she made an impetuous step toward him.

"Have you still enough faith in me to remove the mountain of doubt which my caprice and folly have built up between us? Can you love me again?"

For a moment he gazed at her in dumb amazement, and then his arms were about her, and he was assuring her, in broken words, of a love as boundless as the sea into which the mountain that had arisen between them had been cast.

As for Rose, when she and Derry had seen the last of the policemen, all she could think of to say in that moment of relief was:

"And there wasn't any earthquake,

after all!"

"What?" he cried, his merry eyes sparkling again. "There was earthquake, and fire, and flood; and 'tis you who have saved me from all three of them forever."



GUARDIANSHIP Genevieve Greville



HE prima donna paused effectively in the doorway. In lieu of the applause which usually attended her entrance, Miss Boileau accepted the sig-

nificant nudges as appropriate tribute under the circumstances—to her fame. She swished through the office to the inner sanctum to the accompanying jangle of the gold baubles on her chatelaine, leaving a redolent zephyr of seductive extract in her wake.

Two slender girls seated close together on the mission settle, the hand of one interlocking that of the other, exchanged expectant smiles. In the act of closing the door after her, Elise Boileau's eyes scanned the pair in a quick glance which took in the minutest How strangely, how absurdly out of place they appeared! And with the thought the singer was conscious of a fantastic sensation; it was as if she had come suddenly upon a cool, shaded woods, the dew still moist upon the leaves and grass; and the pungent freshness of the air caused her to stop and inhale a long, deep breath, as one hungering for the very cleanliness of it all.

This psychic flight was rudely shattered by the vision of the man behind the desk. He whirled round his revolving chair, shifted the big, black cigar to the other corner of his pendulous mouth, and crossed one short, fat leg over the other. "Bon jour, mad'm'selle. What's the matter—heat or an inspiration?"

Without rising, he shoved a chair toward her.

"Perspiration, I think," the prima donna replied, throwing back her veil and taking recourse to her vanity box. "Well, how are you coming on? Have you made any progress in the selection of the cast? I should like to have this matter off my mind and be able to remain in the country. These are blistering days."

Mr. Rosenthal handed his star a typewritten list of names.

"Everything pretty well settled except them muses of Carroll's. That's the list of candidates submitted to me this morning."

"Have you seen any of them?" Miss Boileau glanced at the sheet.

"Yes, and I'm afraid you'll have to persuade Carroll to cut out the muses. There seems to be a corner on ingénues under forty."

"I don't see how it is possible even were Carroll to consent. The muses are a part of the plot."

The manager read:

"Two muses; natives of Parnassus. Must be young, slender, and the real thing in ingénues."

Mr. Rosenthal put down the paper with a sniff.

"Why didn't he ask for birth certificates while he was at it? Where are you goin' to find 'the real thing in in-

génues'?"

Miss Boileau indicated the motif of the new opera running through her head by clicking her little French heels against the floor.

"Who are the two little girls in white waiting in the reception room?" she said

at length.

"I didn't know there was two little girls in white," Mr. Rosenthal replied, pressing the buzzer. An adolescent youth named Joseph responded. "Jo, who are the two little girls in white?"

Joseph extracted a card from a tangle of string, rubber bands, and chewing gum, and handed it to the manager. He smiled as he watched that gentleman's expression. When Joseph smiled it was a one-sided affair; he opened one corner of his mouth while the other remained tightly closed. It was a smile with a reservation. Joseph had already acquired the art of straddling the fence in any situation, of being prepared to slide down on either side should expediency demand.

"What the—where did they dig up the names? Will you cast your eye over that?" he said, passing the card to the singer with a chuckle and applying a

match to the cigar.

Aphrodée and Florestine, Exponents of Classic Dancing.

Miss Boileau herself smiled.

"From Ioway or Kansas, or I miss my guess!"

Mr. Rosenthal tilted his chair and dug his thumbs under his armpits.

"You surely wouldn't expect such absolute naïveté to originate on Broadway, should you? They are pretty, and young." Miss Boileau appeared lost in thought. She was wandering in the cool green woods, where the dew was still fresh upon the leaves and grass, and the pungent freshness of the air—— "I think I'll see Aphrodée and Florestine. Send them in, Joseph."

Florestine. Send them in, Joseph."

"And which is which?" Miss Boileau smiled into the bright faces as she put

the question.

"I'm Aphrodée."

"And your sister is Florestine, of course."

"I am two years older than my sis-

ter, and her guardian."

Florestine laid her hand upon the younger girl's arm with a protective air. Miss Boileau was impressed by the gently modulated voice, the poise and refinement of manner. There was no embarrassment, no self-consciousness, only a great sincerity and loftiness of mind which shone in the clear, dark eyes, and commanded respect. Even Jo, the office boy, stopped grinning. Mr. Rosenthal had put down his cigar, and regarded them with eyes narrowed to mere chinks.

"Classic dances," Miss Boileau read from the card in her hand. "Where did

you learn to dance?"

"We never learned, in the sense of having an instructor, unless it was dear grandfather." It was Aphrodée, the younger and the prettier, who spoke. Her voice was full and mellow. Miss Boileau recalled the note of the robin early in spring. "I think we were born with the art. You see, grandfather was an artist. All his life he has been a student and a lover of the classics. His one great ambition was to go abroad to study. Sister and I had hoped to make this possible, but grandfather died before we could gratify his lifelong wish. Dear, dear grandfather!"

Miss Boileau sensed rather than saw their hands meet in silent sympathy.

"We miss grandfather very much. He was our only relative. Our mother died when sister was born. Grandfather was an engraver, but his heart was not in it." The explanation came from Florestine. "Yes, grandfather was a genius. He would have been a great artist had he lived. It was he who arranged our dances and directed our poses while he played for us on the flute. And now sister plays the flute while I dance."

Miss Boileau's eyes were riveted upon an unseen article on her lap. She was undergoing a series of conflicting emotions. She dared not look at her manager lest she see an indication of amusement on his part. The very suggestion caused a flood of resentment.

"Of course, you do not know any-

thing about us—about our art, I should say. If you should like to see us dance, sister always carries the flute."

There was a badly repressed cough on the part of the manager. The prima donna reprimanded him with a glance. "I wonder," she began, still fixing him with her eyes, "I wonder whether the stage is in use just now?"

"There's an orchestra rehearsal," he interposed, misconstruing her intention.

"It's almost noon. We'll take advantage of the lunch hour. Joseph, run over to the theater and tell Mr. Von Frieden to wait." She smiled at the girls, now radiant with expectation, and rose. "Will you be good enough to wait for me in the outer office?"

She laid a hand on the shoulder of each girl, and walked with them to the

"Oh, thank you, thank you!"

Their voices blended in response, but Elise Boileau scarcely heard. She was conscious of a strange, intangible longing, an indefinite uneasiness. Then she closed the door.

"Well," said Mr. Rosenthal, tilting back his chair, "well, all I can say is, you must be hard up for amusement."

Miss Boileau's managers had a secret if not an ungrudging respect for their star's business acumen. How this attitude on their part was effected is not necessary to dilate upon farther than to observe that it is characteristic of some natures to admire where they fail to deceive. But just what kind of crotchet inspired her to waste her time in "trying out" two such obvious amateurs was beyond Mr. Rosenthal's comprehension.

"You can never tell what these women stars'll do next," he told himself, as he slammed down the lid of his rolltop desk and went out to lunch.

Elise Boileau's real name was Sarah Martin. Partly because it looked more imposing on the program, partly because of her dark beauty and soft fullness of figure—suggestive of a Latin strain of ancestry—the foreign nom de théâtre was selected. Perhaps, too, the appellation suggested foreign shores. Between the unnoticed exit of Sarah

Martin, chorus girl, and the triumphant entrance of Elise Boileau, prima donna, a period of twelve years intervened. Miss Boileau's expatriation would probably have passed unnoticed but for a disgruntled colleague of the "why-I-knew - her-when-she-was-in-the-chorus"

type

After that the newspapers referred to her as "our brilliant countrywoman," Just as foreign labels improve the bouquet of California champagne, so the stamp of "made in Europe" stimulates the box-office receipts. And to have one's name coupled with nobility—be it ever so profligate a specimen-in no ways detracts from the fair fame of the couple. The press agent sent out a pretty little idyll purporting to be the true story of the romantic attachment between the singer and the "patron of art" under whose protection she had perfected her career. It told how, ever alert for budding genius, the marquis had discovered the talented girl singing in a second-rate music hall in an Italian city, struggling to support an invalid mother and various small sisters and brothers. From this life he had rescued her and started her on a career during which she "had come to be the idol of crowned heads and nobility of all Europe."

Elise Boileau hardly lived up to the extravagant tales accredited her. As far as her profession admitted, she lived a rather secluded life. A lady journalist who once interviewed her commented flippantly—in the prevailing mode among lady journalists—on the studied air of detachment, an impersonal attitude suggestive of hidden sorrow, "a most fetching and novel pose for the up-to-date prima donna given to airing her views on lingerie and Husbands I

Have Divorced."

It must not be gathered from the foregoing that Elise Boileau was a recluse. A woman in her walk of life has a plentiful following of friends and sycophants. There were those attracted by the glitter and illusion of the stage, expecting to find in that environment a freedom from the restraint of conventional society, as well as a fillip to jaded

Others there were who found genuine enjoyment in a camaraderie with this woman of the world. She had absorbed a certain culture and refinement of manner from her association with well-born roues. That, though coming in contact with the weakest, if not the worst, side of human nature, she had still been able to resist, to a certain degree, the disintegrating influences of her environment was no small tribute to her strength of character. She had fought her battle with life, and to all effect and purpose had won. And, in a measure, external to all she had experienced, she was the better able to assess the costliness of her success.

It was this assessment of the past which occupied her thoughts as she sat in the rear of the dim theater amid the

white, shrouded seats.

After the glare and heat without, the

clammy coolness was grateful.

The blue light of a solitary "bunch" revealed the ugly disillusion of "behind the scenes." The musicians straggled in. They emerged from the orchestra pit like so many jacks in a box, making guttural noises. A young man, slender, beardless, with dark hair undulating back from a high and bulging forehead, slipped into the leader's seat and tuned his violin. Blatant voices pregnant with self-esteem blustered in from the front of the house.

Presently there fell upon the ear a piping, plaintive and from afar. The leader raised his head. By ones and twos, the voices faltered, listened, and

were still.

Came a shepherd boy, slowly, dreamily, like a youthful Pan; his slim loins girded with a black lamb's fleece, upon his head a vine-twined wreath. Crosslegged he sat upon the earth, and piped,

The singer marveled at the sensuous fascination of the flute. It kindled, and held the listening sensibilities. It fired the imagination with its illusive design; intangible emotions, seductive charm, a warm exhilaration suffused the eerie motif of the fantasie, a fantasie of woods and nymphs.

Lured by the shepherd's flute a dryad came. The watchers craned their necks.

A corpulent person lounging in the rear laved his nether lip.

"Well, say!" he said. "Well, say!"
The scented creature with the purply
tie and socks to match raised his jeweled digits to his low-cut brow.

"Heavens!" expressed his feelings,

and his kind.

The dryad danced. Her small, bare feet and naked limbs seemed poised on air. The sheerness of the shiftlike covering of her body revealed the rounded firmness of flesh. The hard blue light lent to all a marble whiteness. With the movement of the dance, the color dyed her checks and lips—lips half parted in a smile. So real, so unassumed, it seemed to those who watched, she danced because she must, out of sheer joy and fullness of expression. Hers was the very essence of youth—the spirit incarnate.

Enticed, cajoled, and swayed, the piper joined the dance. Allegro! Heads wag, bodies sway. Volante i rapido! O Jugend! Jugend! Then, fainter and tremulous, like a wandering zephyr groping its lost way, the melancholy cadence of a violin partnered the shepherd's flute. The dryad paused, and smiled at the player with wondering

eve

And those—with soul—who saw the inspiration born called it the Birth of

Love

Andante, now a minor key. Pensitivo, like rippling brook or soughing trees or vesper songs of birds; a wistfulness, faith's endless vows, love's fearsomeness. Legatissimo. Pianissimo. With arms entwined, with cheek to cheek, the shepherd and his nymph steal away. The visionary woods, the soulful pipe—silence.

A woman rushed down the center

aisle.

"Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!"

The prima donna's voice rang clear and strong. She beat her hands together, than tore off her gloves, and beat again. The impromptu audience, needing only the singer's approval for its cue, expressed itself in prolonged and vigorous applause. The scented creature hurled himself down the aisle, and

fell upon the star, bubbling with adjectives and enthusiasm. His falsetto treble drowned the guttural buzz of the

musicians.

"My Gawd, Elise, did you ever in all your—that only goes to show—that flute—and Ludy's obligato. Heavens! Where's Carroll? We've got the real thing in muses—regular vestal virgins. My Gawd, donna, if they can make that sort of an impression without scenery, and lights, and all the other trimmings we can tack on, what'll they do with 'em!"

He ran breathlessly up the aisle and paddled with Mr. Rosenthal's coat la-

pels.

"Sign 'em quick! Sign 'em before anybody else gets on to 'em. Heavens, Rosy, where did you dig 'em up? I always said you were one of the canniest old boys in the business."

And the scented person, whose own business it was to design costumes and arrange weirdly artistic color combinations, rushed off in search of—well, probably a chocolate ice-cream soda.

Mr. Rosenthal came slowly down the aisle. Obviously he was ruminating from the very way in which he chewed the end of his eigar. Mr. Rosenthal was a man of few words. He had a reputation for being a sagacious man. It is more than probable that Mr. Rosenthal had never heard the word "serendipity," or, having heard, knew not its definition; and it is possible that Mr. Rosenthal believed in luck.

Back on the stage his lady star stood

talking with the girls.

"We are so happy, so very happy, sister and I. It is all very strange—the last movement, I mean. I never danced like that, and sister had never attempted the motive in minor key. It was you who inspired it, *Herr Direktor*. I felt

it—I understood—it was inspiration. Do you think you will remember it? Oh, it would be too terrible were you not oble to recell it?"

not able to recall it!"

Ludwig Von Frieden flushed, and vowed he could never forget, never, never, never! Ach Himmel! How could he ever forget! And, while they talked, or to be more exact, while she talked and Ludwig listened, the manager accosted his star in this wise:

"Well, I guess the laugh's on me. What'll it be? I'm game, all right.

Are you?"

"Game? What do you mean?" Miss Boileau puckered her brow.

Mr. Rosenthal jerked his head in the direction of the muses.

"Will you stand for 'em in your own show?"

Miss Boileau looked at him with fine

contempt.

"Look here, Rosy," she said, "I may have my eccentricities about the center of the stage. When a woman arrives at that stage of her career where her name goes up in big letters, it's pretty safe to assume that she's made a hard fight. It's a pretty safe bet, too, that if that name is to remain in big letters, she'll have to keep on fighting. However, I think I know a good thing as well as you do. I want these girls engaged for my company, if for no other consideration than—"

"What other consideration could

011----

"You wouldn't understand even if I could explain. Sign them—and don't be stingy."

The Carroll-Von Frieden opera was an unqualified hit. The opening night had been postponed for a week, during which Ludy wore himself to a shadow writing the music for the dancers. The reviewers of the metropolis who take themselves, if not their vocation, seriously refrained from painful puns and impudent personalia. They pronounced the book more or less original and the music tuneful, which encomium was not nearly so gratifying as the box-office receipts. Elise Boileau was a good

drawing card; but without a proper vehicle, the best-paying star lags super-

fluous.

The dancers made a sensation. Imitators sprang up like weeds after a rain. The public, however, refused the "justas-good" brand. It was the very simplicity of the original which charmed. This simplicity was not preserved without controversy. The scented designer of costumes and the stage manager with hackneyed ideas would have embellished the dancers' act with a chorus of nymphs representing wild flowers, birds, bees, and what not.

Miss Boileau scorned the suggestion. In this she was aided and abetted by Ludy. The only interpolation permitted was an aria sung off stage by the prima donna, who refrained from sharing the storm of applause which invariably fol-

lowed the "act."

Much and varied was the gossip among the members of the profession anent the prima donna's indubitable interest in the girls she had launched on the top wave of success. It is an indisputable fact that stage folk are envious of each other; and Elise Boileau had the reputation of demanding-and gettingall that was coming to her. It was rumored that on various occasions she had brought about the dismissal of certain members of her company who found it necessary to respond to more than one encore. Certain spiteful persons whispered that the girls were the singer's own offspring, a fact she had kept suo rosa for lo, these many years.

Miss Boileau herself made no explanation. She watched over the sisters like a tutelary goddess. She provided them with a maid, and saw that they were comfortably housed in a respectable neighborhood within easy reach of her own domicile. She conducted them to and from the theater in her automobile, or placed them in charge of Von Frieden, whose doglike devotion was second only to her own guardianship. The sisters were encouraged to study foreign tongues, beginning with German; their interest in the classics was sustained. In short, the fairy godmother sought to fortify her protégées

against the influences of their environment.

In all, Ludwig Von Frieden was a stanch ally. It was a sympathetic quartet which often dined or lunched together, sometimes in the prima donna's apartment, sometimes in the gilded restaurants where glare and pastiche cover heterogeneous cuisine like a French sauce disguises an over "high" meat.

It was plainly discernible that at these public functions Ludy was never quite himself. Perhaps the too obvious craning of necks or the purposely pointed admiration directed at the singer's table whenever she appeared in public with her charges grated upon the young musician's sensibilities. Sleek individuals, with baggy eyelids and curvilinear torsos, accosted the singer at table, hoping on pretext of renewing a somewhat hazy past acquaintance to effect an introduction with the dancers. These and like ruses were met with black looks. Mash notes accompanied by flowers were courteously acknowledged in the third person. Once Ludy slapped a person's face for his persistency in accosting the dancers at the stage door.

In face of the adulation heaped upon them, the marvel was that the girls retained their charming simplicity of manner. Vanity appeared to play no part in their lives. To them evil did not exist; or, existent, belonged to a world as remote as Mars. Next to their devotion to each other they lavished their affection upon their patroness. Florestine, the elder, accepted her position as "second fiddle," as the one to which she

Ludwig, too, came in for a generous share of affection; but it was the sympathetic attachment of fellow artists each for the other. The attraction of sex was yet a sealed book. That Ludwig Von Frieden was madly in love with the younger of the sisters he who ran might read. His colleagues no longer dared to joke about the musician's passion. Only the chorus girls had the temerity to chaff him about it.

was born.

A tantalizing clique were in the habit of gathering at the peephole before the curtain went up on the first act to take a survey of the boxes and the front rows of stalls. If, as frequently happened, a particularly "sporty" element were gathered who waxed overnoisy in their enthusiasm over the dancing muses, Ludy's scowls were the signal

for roguish smiles.

Every night about the time the quarter hour was being called, Ludwig climbed the spiral stairway leading to the dancers' dressing room, one flight up, tattooed on the door, and to the inquiry "Who is it?" responded tenderly: "It is I—Von Frieden. Open but a little—so—Blumen für cine Blume." Die Blume was the name he had given his beloved.

"Wunderschön!" The musician flushed with pleasure at hearing the words he had taught her. "Wunderschön! Danke sehr, Herr Von Frieden,

danke sehr! Oh, wie süss!"

Ludwig knew she had buried her dainty little nose in his bouquet. Lucky flowers! He smiled, tripped blithely away, humming softly to himself Heine's words, "Thou art like a flower," which seemed to have been written expressly for her.

A party of five young men were dining at Sherry's. Each was a representative scion of America's moneyed aristocracy. The dinner was a stag welcome-to-our-city affair tendered Alfred Vandewater on his return from a trip around the world, whence his family had sent him as a sort of polishing-off process immediately following his graduation from Harvard. Not that young Vandewater needed a polish. Like most of his genre, he was adept in the refined vices which are included in the curriculum of culture acquired by our millionaires' sons.

Vandewater, Senior, held to the still-extant theory that an incumbent part of the education of male members of society is the sowing of some considerable wild oats before settling down to the real business of life. Mrs. Vandewater had never been introduced to the word "eugenics." It was not in her set. She reared her daughters as she had been reared before them, inculcating the

principle that next to beauty, virtue was woman's greatest asset—having in mind

physical virtue, of course.

Vandewater, Junior, had not only lived up to the parental expectations; he had exceeded them. This excess was the edifying topic of conversation at the dinner to which we have referred. His chum, who had accompanied him on tour, had entertained the guests with sundry episodes of purplish hue splashed with vermilion; "Vandy" himself being far too modest to do other than elucidate these episodes at points not sufficiently impressionistic.

The place cards, too, punctuated the moral caliber of the assemblage. Atmospherically French, they were exe-

cuted in Germany.

The dinner had reached the liqueur

stage.

"And talking about girlies," guzzled the shrimplike personage who responded to the title of Major, "there's a pair of peaches doin' a dance at the Imperial that'll make you take notice! Sans shoes, sans stockings, sans pretty near everything!"

"I say! They are dreams, now, aren't they?" The speaker was a monocled youth with a near-English accent, both having been acquired with the annexation of a title to the family.

"I've seen 'em—five times—the little blonde for mine! Wait till Vandy focuses his orbs upon her. You always were strong for blondes; eh, Vandy? What! You're going to send for a box? All right. I guess I can stand it again! No hurry; the dollies don't come on until nine-fifteen."

They came in late, of course—and noisily. The tenor was singing a love song, as tenors are wont to do. The representative sons of representative American-dollar aristocracy promptly

began to guy him.

Vandewater, less maudlin than the rest—or of infinite capacity—reproved his guests gently. Whereupon the offenders retired to the back of the box, and promptly went to sleep. When the prima donna entered, Vandewater was leaning back in his chair looking over the audience. Even the applause which

greeted her entrance did not incite his interest. It was only after the first notes of her voice reached his ear that he turned sharply, jerked his square jaw forward, and fumbled on the floor for a program.

"Why-why, if it isn't my old friend Elise Boileau, sure's fate! Didn't even know she was in the show. I'm going right out and order some flowers.

"Oh, you know her, do you?" queried his only wide-awake companion. "That's luck! Maybe you can manage

an introduction to the fairies."

"That's easy! Elise and I are old friends. She'll introduce me, all right," Vandewater replied, with an easy laugh, as they made their way to the lobby.

"Well, if she does-if she introduces you to the girlies, you'll be the first one in this old town to get by the picket lines. They say she keeps 'em under lock and key."

Vandy winked.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Jack. I'll bet you a dinner, covers for ten, choose your own time, place, and girls, that I'll have the dollies out at supper within a week."

"I'll be generous, Van. Make it two

weeks, and I'll take the bet."

Vandewater had an ingratiating personality. Also he had a tenacity of purpose when predisposed toward its accomplishment. He planned his tactics with as much forethought as a Scotchman playing at drafts. His reappearance in the train of the prima donna appeared to be a quite natural continuation of an acquaintance begun during his sophomore year. Elise Boileau had always thought young Vandewater a little better-certainly no worse-than the average young blood who looks to the stage and its people for amusement both in and out of the theater. On the young man's side, he honestly liked the singer, whom he characterized as "a sensible little woman you can take out to supper without waking up the next morning to find you're married."

If Miss Boileau had any suspicion of Vandy's little ruse, it was speedily dissipated. He devoted himself to her as assiduously as she would permit. Miss

Boileau was not a woman of leisure. The wear and tear of stage life are considerable. Current opinion notwithstanding, the life of an actress is not one continuous round of wine suppers and love affairs. It is more likely to be a humdrum and irritating concern of massage, regulated diet, and exercise,

and work.

Vandewater's progress Therefore was slow. He managed, however, to drop in the theater once or twice during the week. He studiously ignored the singer's protégées, though an introduction had been effected, or referred to them with such good-natured intolerance as "Send home the kiddies and come for a bite of supper," or "Get rid of the little barefoots and come for a spin in my new sixty-horse-power."

It was in the very nature of things that Elise should feel a bit piqued at his indifference toward her wards. When pressed for an opinion, he replied non-

chalantly:

"Oh, yes, they are very pretty creatures, and the dance is a novelty, but girls like that are apt to be stupid doll babies. They'd bore me to death, I shouldn't know what to say to them. Cut 'em out, won't you, when I'm

around?"

This state of affairs went on for a number of weeks. Vandy took the chaffing of his friends in good part, and gave them the dinner at which all the old standbys from the chorus-girl world were present. The only significant remark he made when called upon to make a speech in acknowledging his defeat, was the threadbare and humorously sententious "He who laughs last laughs best."

At the end of the fifth week, the prima donna came down with tonsilitis. The theater was dark for two nights and a matinée performance. What more natural than the girls should share her confinement, or that Vandewater should call to inquire after her health. stopping to chat a bit with the girls? He had so much to talk about, the interesting things to be seen in foreign travel, art in various forms, peoples, customs, and-Van was good to look upon; tall,

dark, with clear olive skin and regular features on which dissipation had not yet left its incriminating stamp.

It was Ludwig who first noted her drooping. Her dancing lacked its habitual buoyancy. A lassitude characterized her every move. Miss Boileau consulted a physician, who prescribed a tonic and longer hours in bed. The girl chafed under the strict régime. She declared she was only tired, and above everything else she craved solitude. The learned M. D. advised them to humor her whim.

For the first time in their lives the sisters occupied separate rooms. Florestine, lying awake at night, would hear her sister walking the floor. Or, falling asleep after a night's vigil, would awaken to find Die Blume returning from an early morning walk. On other occasions, the sick girl would burst into tears, and throw herself impulsively into her sister's arms. Flora accepted these outbursts as a symptom of the ailment, and, while she secretly fretted, she did not think the condition of sufficient importance to carry to their patroness.

If love is blind, jealousy is arguseyed. It was Ludwig who discovered the key to the situation. Rushing into the theater late one stormy night, with his little bouquet held stiffly in his hand, he came upon Vandewater in earnest conversation with the back doorkeeper. At the same moment, he thought he saw the black-gowned maid of the dancers' scurrying away through the wings, holding something in her hands beneath her apron.

The mist and rain had clouded his eyeglasses; and before he could adjust them Vandewater had turned and greeted him noisily. He lurched against the musician, throwing one arm around the latter's shoulders to steady himself. Von Frieden saw at a glance the young man was intoxicated.

"Hello, Herr Direktor—you're late! What's that you're got in your hand? Flowers, eh? Blumen für die Blume. Hah—ha! How's that for an accent? Say. old man, why don't you get her a real bouquet while you're about it?

Lilies—lilies—they are just coming on the market. Annunciation lilies! By gad! They'd suit her right down to the ground! Funny I didn't think of it before."

For a moment it appeared to the back doorkeeper that Von Frieden would strike the other man. Vandewater's insolent smile changed to a menacing expression. The doorkeeper stepped between them. Then Von Frieden passed on white with rage, muttering to himself as he went.

"Schweinkerl!" he said. "Schwein-kerl!"

It was nearing two o'clock in the morning when Elise Boileau was aroused from her reverie in front of a smoldering wood fire by the ringing of the telephone bell. Instinctively she felt a presage of evil. As she took down the receiver she braced herself.

"Hello! Yes, Flora. Not come in yet? Why—didn't she come home with you? To supper with Ludwig? Oh, then there's no cause for worry. They've probably got to talking and have not noticed the time. What? I don't understand. Speak more slowly, child! Ludwig is with you now? Where did he leave—— Two hours since! A note? Read it to me, read it to me! Oh, my God! Come to me at once, do you hear? At once!"

Vandewater looked at his watch and frowned impatiently.

"Never mind those things to-night," he said to the maid in the act of gathering the empty flower boxes scattered about the stateroom of the *suite-deluxe*. "Your mistress will not need you any more to-night. Mind you keep close to your cabin, and don't come on deck until I send for you. Understand?"

The maid responded, and went out. Vandewater bolted the door. He smiled enigmatically as he surveyed the table with covers for two. It was a dainty affair, with its nuptiallike decorations. The air was heavy with the perfume of flowers, lilies of the valley, waxlike gardenias, lilies, Easter lilies—just coming

on the market. A little doll, brave in its bridal finery, veil and orange blossoms complete, marked her place.

He rearranged the wicker chair, covered with a white fur rug and heaped high with cushions. Then he crossed to the door communicating with the cabin beyond, and knocked gently. The coarse wrangle of the stevedores on the pier, the scurry of feet on the upper decks, the blended shrieks of multitudinous river boats drowned his rataplan. He opened. The lights were extinguished.

She stood with her face pressed against the cabin window, watching the moving lights of the river traffic. Vandewater put his arm around her from behind, and raised her lips to his. A tear trickled down her cheek and wet

his own.

"What is it?" he demanded, almost brusquely. "Do you regret?"

She smiled at him through her tears. "No, no, no!" she said, pressing her face close to his. "What a dreadful thing to even suggest! Only-only it seems so sad that a love like ours should be marred by deceit. No, don't scowl. I realize that it cannot be otherwise.

Oh, my love, my love, don't you understand? It is because I love you so much-because our love is such a beautiful thing that I do not want even a shadow to stain it. It hurts, it hurts to think of causing others pain when I—we—are so happy."

He looked into her eyes with a tenderness and wonderment which wholly transfigured his face. And a sense of dissatisfaction with himself, with the man he had come to look upon as a former self, grew and sent the blood to his forehead.

"Little Vestal," he whispered tenderly. "Little Vestal-you will make a

man of me yet."

Vandewater, seated at her feet, with his head resting against her knees, puffed thoughtfully at his cigar. From time to time the contemplation gave way to an amused smile. The girl's fingers playing lovingly through his hair

would be seized and pressed to his lips: or when the brow puckered, held fast between his palms. The intermittent moods of boyish abandon and mannish responsibility puzzled him. Vandewater himself would have said that introspec-

tion was not his long suit.

The sensation was new, and not altogether pleasant in certain phases. For instance: If anybody had told him that night of the dinner party at Sherry's that a certain barefoot dancer would in the near future alter the whole course and purpose of his life, he would have scoffed at the idea. And just why the blood mounted to the very roots of his hair at the recollection of his vainglorious boast only the young man himself knew.

Love! It was not the first time he had believed himself a victim of the tender passion. Only to awaken to a sense of satiety and disgust, and to a sneering conclusion that love was a poet's dream, or a physiological caprice. As for marriage—marriage as an institution had never appealed to him. The example set by his father and mother was one not calculated to inspire confidence.

To be sure, the world believed them to be-well, if not a model couple, an exemplary one, inasmuch as they had always adjusted their differences in private and had managed to keep out of the newspapers. No one of their particular set ever commented on the fact that Vandewater, Senior, elected to spend his summers on his vacht, while his wife traveled abroad in search of

various "cures."

Or, again, he had seen his sisters and numberless friends enter into a more or less holy alliance; some with ardent delusions, some because it was the conventional thing to do when one wanted a girl, who had a family behind her; others as a commercial proposition. But in each and every case the result was nearly always solved by the common denominator-boredom. Thus he had come to look on marriage as a game of chance, to be indulged in when one happened to be in a gaming mood.

But now-Vandewater ejaculated

aloud, and pressed the fondling fingers with an ardor which made the girl cry out. Yes, he knew it would be a terrible thought to the family. In his mind's eye he pictured the pater in the act of breaking the news. The mater would reach for her smelling salts; there would be hysteria; the doctor would prescribe rest and a change of scene. The pater would write him a long letter such as he used to receive after an especially flagrant prank at college. There would be the threat of disinheritance.

Gad! Not merely the threat, but it was probable that the guv nor would cut him off clean. The family had always prided themselves on keeping out of the newspapers. There would be no escaping them this time. Glaring headlines. The family tree torn limb from limb, Photographs, and all the rest of the impertinent personalia. What if the pater

did cut him off?

Whew! The very suggestion made little beads of perspiration break out on his forehead. Pshaw! Why cross the bridge until it was necessary? If the worst came to the worst, he could engage as a chauffeur. Anyway, he knew motors from Alpha to Omega.

Meanwhile, he did not intend to have his happiness marred by problems which were to solve themselves in their own time, in their own way. He was here with her. She was his own, to have and to hold. Love! Love! This was the real thing. The others had been spurious imitations. Was it possible, after all, that love could work miracles?

He looked at the girl lying back in the white rug. The pensive expression of her eyes fired his sense of propriety. He knew she was thinking of those who

were still dear to her.

Well, he, too, was sorry to give them pain, but he hated scenes, and he felt convinced that Elise Boileau would never have sanctioned his suit. Elise Boileau was too wise, too sophisticated to believe that young men of his type might be remade, rehabilitated, as it were, through love. Then there was that "crazy Dutchman"! He had always been a thorn in the young man's

flesh. Of course, he loved her. How could he help it? Poor old Ludy! Oh, hang it! If only the old ship were on her way, plowing through the waves—swish—swash—she in the steamer chair beside him, hour after hour, day after day.

He was fond of the water, the rhythmic throb of the engine. It lulled to sleep. If they would only stop that walking and pounding overhead!

Pounding-or was it a knock? Some

one was fumbling at the door.

Vandewater arose. They looked at each other. Yes, there it was again—unmistakably a knock. The young man hesitated, and then indicated the cabin beyond. The girl entered and closed the door after her. The knocking became insistent. Vandewater squared his shoulders, took a long draw at his cigar, and tossed it upon a plate.

"Well, what is it?" he growled, lowering his voice and standing close to the

door.

Silence, then Elise Boileau said:

"Open the door, Van."

She had taken in every detail of the supper table in a single, sweeping glance. Then she sank into a seat and pressed her fingers to her temples. The young man took an unconscionably long time to close the door and to adjust his chair to a comfortable angle.

"Well?" he queried at last.

Vandewater had braced himself for a scene. He was not prepared, however, for tears. His acquaintance with the intricacies of feminine psychology was, at best, superficial. He had read of tears of joy, but never before had he witnessed a deluge of precipitated happiness.

It came about in this wise: Having opened the conversation with the monosyllabic "Well," he had faced the prima donna's flashing eyes and compressed lips, and divined the suspicion written there. With the hope of forestalling the torrent of reproach about to be undamned, the young man had reached in his pocket, brought forth an official-

looking document, which he proffered the agitated woman who now faced him like an accusing angel.

He laughed a little, rather a silly bleat, he told himself afterward, as he

said:

"Hoboken, Midnight, A real minister. If you don't believe it, here's his card. Damned unromantic spot for an

eloping couple, but-

Just what the young man intended to say he never remembered. The prima donna swayed, and for a moment he thought she would faint. He poured a glass of wine, and emptied the contents down her neck instead of down her throat. He laughed. The laugh was infectious.

She caught Van in her arms; and to his utter bewilderment kissed him.

"Van! Van! I thought—I thought

You know what I thought!
And, oh, the suffering, the cruelty of these past few hours! Oh, my friend, do you not understand why I have guarded her jealously? Do you not realize that I wanted to shield her from the bitter disillusionment, the cruel awakening, which I myself had suffered—which I lived down, but which she would never have survived."

A door opened softly, Elise Boileau

held out her arms.

"Oh, my darling, come to me! Tell

me that all is well with you. That you are happy—happy—"

Then came the deluge. Vandy never could endure to see a woman cry. And when it came to two women weeping in each others' arms, out of pure joy—well, Van pulled the cap down over his eyes and went for a turn on deck.

When he came back Ludy was there. Van scowled, and would have turned away, but the musician, pale and mistyeved, came toward him with an out-

stretched hand.

Van's own lips twitched a little, when after repeated pressure of his hand Ludwig at last found voice to whisper huskily:

"Forgive us. We have wronged you. You will be good to her—ves? Die

Blume. Die Blume!"

He looked at her—so tenderly; then smiled bravely at the man who had

culled the sweetest flower.

"You would permit—yes? Ach Gott!" As in a dream, he took her face between his hands, and like a sacred thing his lips sought her brow. They heard him say as one in prayer:

"Betend, dass Gott dich erhalte so

rein und schoen-und hold."

And though Van did not understand the meaning of the words, their purport pierced his heart, and echoed a fervent "Amen!"

EMPTINESS

SOMETIMES, comrade, my restless spirit leaves you,
And wanders paths that wind away from home;
Not dreaming if the absence ever grieves you,
Nor weighing where my vagrant thoughts may roam.
In some strange land of fitful necromancy,
Beyond the dale where life with you is spent,
I dare to hope, and, in the hoping, fancy
That I may find divorced from you—content.

Sometimes, dear heart, when ill at ease and dreary,
And fretted by each monotone of care,
When sick at soul of sorrow's miserere,
I crave to know a sweeter atmosphere.
But though I stray where desert sands are burning,
Or over leas that wooing winds caress,
From alien realms I am not long returning—
Apart from you, oh, all is emptiness!
RALPH M. THOMSON.



O think such things can happen!"

Gardiner's straight mouth shut grimly on the exclamation as he strode across the

wide veranda, with its luxury of rugs and cushioned chairs and scattered books, heedless of everything but the news he had to tell and its possible reception by a father who had deliberately put his elder son out of his life

for the flimsiest of reasons.

Gardiner rang sharply, then he looked at his watch. It was only nine o'clock. Paul Denning's father was probably breakfasting quietly, and for three hours Paul had been fighting with some wonderful supremacy of his strong will for a little more life, that he might not leave his wife and his little girls resourceless in the living they would soon have to take up without him.

"Mr. Denning," said Gardiner to the

butler. "Is he here?"

The butler hesitated, but Gardiner's face commanded.

"Which Mr. Denning, sir? The elder, or Mr. John?"

"Either, or both. I am Doctor Gardiner. I have bad news for them. I must see them at once."

"They are breakfasting, sir. Shall I

give them your name?"

"No, you will show me to the breakfast room—immediately."

The butler gave Gardiner another

The butler gave Gardiner another look, and then preceded him down the

long hall in silence, throwing open a door to a charming room where two men sat at breakfast. The younger rose with an exclamation of surprise at Gardiner's appearance in the doorway. Gardiner closed the door on the servant.

"Have you seen the morning papers?" he asked, without greeting or preamble. "No," said John Denning. The

older man kept silence.

Gardiner waited a moment while the fact that he had something unbearable to announce crept into the atmosphere of the quiet room. Each man strung

himself to endurance.

"The extra-fare fast train going South was wrecked last night," said Gardiner to the older man. "Your son Paul was one of those ground into shreds of human beings that only a horrible thing like this can do. I was on the train. I brought him home this morning, still living. It seems he was on his way to put the finishing touch to what would mean a competence for his family. He thinks he can live long enough to put it through—with help. He wants two things. He wants his children taken from the house before they can see—the thing he has become. And he wants help in his work."

For a moment there was a dead silence in the room. Gardiner looked down at the floor, and waited pitilessly. He knew how the older man before him had interrupted his son's success, utterly undoing years of patient work merely because he had married a girl on the threshold of a promising stage career—a girl who had had to take an ugly part in no way identified with what she was, save as she did it well and gained repu-

tation by it.

He knew the patience with which Paul Denning had begun again; the denial of his subsequent living; the refusal of his father to see the new success won by sheer, clear-brained work against odds the father had helped to increase. He recalled that even the advent of the two little granddaughters had not healed the foolish breach. These things made him pitiless.

John Denning spoke at length, his face whitened into a seriousness it sel-

dom held.

"Did you come in your car, Gardiner?"

"Yes."

"Are you going back again—to Paul?"

"Vec 25

"Will you take me? I will bring the children back here at once. And then I will see what can be done to help Paul. Will you come, father?"

The older man did not seem to hear. He sat staring before him almost vacantly. Gardiner turned impatiently.

"There is no time to spare," he said grimly, and opened the door.

But the older man did not stir to accompany them.

Seated in a corner of his veranda that overlooked the Sound, Paul Denning's father stared at the dim sky line of the city, where but a scant half hour away his son lay dying. Then his eyes returned to two children playing on the lawn. He watched them with a somberness that even their exquisite coloring and daintiness of contour did not lift, taking note of their grace of movement, that with its suggestion of breeding was more than child grace, and listening to their gay little voices, whose clear modulation brought him every word.

Hand in hand, with their childish hesitancy evidently overborne by a delicious sense of adventure, they were peeping into the green gloom of a wildgrape arbor—two little girls scarcely more than a year apart, almost the same height, surely of the same parentage, and yet so different that they themselves were familiar with the inevitable in-

quiry: "Are you sisters?"

One, the one just the inch taller that proclaimed her added fifteen months, had long brown eyes under an open brow surmounted by brown braids that one who had studied the delicate, oval face had arranged in a gleaming coronet tied low on each side with scarlet ribbons. There was honor in the direct look of the long eyes, and there were poise and dignity in the movements of the little ten-year-old body, so straight, and slim, and supple.

The other child floated about, even handclasped as she was by her sister, light as thistledown—the born dancer. Her curls, touched by the sun into threads of gold, framed a piquant chin, and rippled above her blue eyes, a feathery aureole of allurement. She peeped into the arbor, and spoke softly:

"Doesn't it look cool and green, Paula, like the bottom of the sea?" The older girl shook her head.

"You never saw the bottom of the sea, Amy."

Amy made quick protest.

"I might have. You don't know."
"Yes, I do. I am oldest. I know all
you have seen."

"You do not know all I remember. I

have a memorable.

The older girl hesitated, not quite clear in her direct little mind what a memorable might be, and neither liking to ask in the face of the accented I nor wishing to contradict while uncertain of her facts. She took advantage of an old refuge.

"You cannot tie your own shoe strings, if you have," she said.

Amy let go her sister's hand and danced into the arbor.

"Well, then," she said softly, "you will tie my shoe strings for me, and I

will remember for you."

Looking at the uplifted chin and the provocative blue eyes, the man on the veranda felt it suddenly possible that the little lady in the arbor would always find some one to tie her shoe strings, and his thoughts swung back again to her father, who, even as a small boy, had obtained personal and loving service from every living thing that came his way. The thought sent a sullen line of pain from between his eyes down to the mouth.

Neither of the sons he had been left to bring up alone with such care as a wifeless man busy with wealth-getting can bestow had given him much else but disappointment. Paul who had not even quarreled with him but just gone away unable to forgive what he had said of the woman Paul wished to marry! How foolish it now seemed that he should have been so angry over it; that he should have followed his anger by depriving Paul of his well-earned place in his business; that he should never have been able to forgive—not Paul's marriage, but his own injustice to him.

Nor had he been able to find solace in the profitless career of his younger son, with its clubs, and its hunts, and its races and yachts, and its unearned wastefulness.

Once in a while, through the hard years that had followed his older son's marriage, letters had reached him in round, childish hands—letters labored but charming. They were signed Paula after the father and Amy after the mother. One letter held the picture of a mere girl with her arms around two smaller girls—a girl with a provocative chin, and a cloud of curling hair above her forehead, and honor in her eyes. Any man learned in women might have seen in the mere girl's face all that a man needed to fire him to achievement or to lull him to rest; all that a child needed of tenderness or wisdom.

But Paul Denning's father did not add understanding of women to his ability to judge men. And so he had looked on the girl's face with resentment at the beauty that had robbed him of a son equipped to carry on his father's work, and left him only a son who spent his money laughing at the reluctance with which it was given.

"Ripping!" this son had said of the picture. "Paul always gets the best.

What a hit she would have made if she had kept on! A pity!"

"You are a fool," said his father.
"I was brought up by a wise man,"
the son had answered.

The father had been left musing over the impossibility of his having called Paul a fool or of Paul's having made him such an answer if he had. And now lest they should see the maimed and broken thing, alive only in its anguished eyes, this thing that only yesterday had been their comrade and their playfellow, Paul's children were here in his father's house for the first time, knowing nothing of the tragedy encompassing them on every hand.

To the children their grandfather's house had always been a promised goal of some far-away happy time. It was odd that they should reach it without father or mother; and mother had looked very white and strange when she had told them to go.

"Perhaps I will send for you to come back," she had said, in that way she had spoken the time she had broken her wrist and it had hurt; "but if I do not, be brave until I come." And then she had kissed them.

"Mother wanted to cry," Amy had said to the new uncle, "but she would not for fear it might spoil our visit. We packed out clothes in such a hurry perhaps we forgot things; and there are no little girls at your house, are there?"

"No," said the new uncle, sitting down between them in the tonneau of his big, red car; "but I shall be going this way every day, and I can bring you anything you need from home." The new uncle had the kindest of faces,

"I don't think mother was going to cry," said Paula. "She looks softer when she wants to cry. She looked the way she did when I was burned. I asked her if I could help her, and she said only by having a happy time with grandfather. Is it not strange to be going to see grandfather? I wish mother could have come. Mother will be lonely."

"We will write to her," said Amy, "and tell her all about it."

They had taken possession of grand-

father's house with entire simplicity. Their gay little voices called to each other with triumph over each new discovery in the queer, man-ordered house, Each stately tree was assigned its dryad and its faun. Fairies hovered over the garden, and a big, red dragon slept in the garage ready to seize wandering princesses and make them into a stew.

"You," said Amy to the new uncle, "are Merlin the Enchanter, because you can go in where the dragon is and come out unharmed. You can even tame him

and ride him."

"Merlin," said Paula, with her honest eyes on the new uncle's face, grave for the first time in years, "was very much older than you. He was most a hundred."

"You will have to make me Perseus,"

said the new uncle.

But Paula was not to be confused. "There is no Andromeda," she said. He stared at her.

"No," he said, "there is no Andromeda for me. Are even the Greek gods in your little head? What do you know

of Perseus?"

"Mother has told us all those stories," said Amy. "And, besides, we have them in school now. We like them, only the names are hard. Sometimes we mix them up they are so hard. We like the Arthur stories best because the names are easy."

"Guinevere is not easy," corrected

Paula

"No name is easy for Paula," said Amy. "She has no memorable. I do the remembering for her, and she buttons my dress for me. She can button her own dress, and plait her own hair, and make her own bed."

"What is it mother calls it? It is something German. We do not know German. But Amy knows that."

"Das—ewig—weibliche," said Goldilocks carefully.

The new uncle glanced across to where his father sat listening.

"And what does that mean?" he

asked.

"Growing up into a woman pretty soon," said Amy, "Every now and then when mother calls Paula that, father calls her Topaz Eyes. He says that was his mother's name, and that Paula is both things."

"And what does father call you?" said the new uncle to Amy.

"He calls me Goldilocks."

"Sometimes," said Paula, "father calls her Tommy because she shows off. Do you know Tommy, uncle?"

"I am afraid not."

"His other name is Sentimental Tommy, and he was a little boy who could do things, but whenever he did them he always said: 'Am I not a wonder.'"

"But mother," said Goldilocks, "does not mind. She says it is because I am his-tri-on-ic. That means that I like to pretend. Mother says one of us ought to be his-tri-on-ic. Did you ever play 'The Pretenders,' grandfather?"

The tall man, for whom the title of

The tall man, for whom the title of grandfather seemed almost impossible,

shook his head.

"We do," said Goldilocks. "We pretend you are a great king. Mother said you were, and that father was the prince your son. She said father was her Prince Charming. Do you know Prince Charming, uncle?"

"No-no-I think not."

"He married Cinderella. Mother says father does not know any of these things because he had no mother to tell them to him as he was growing up, like we have. It is sad when there is no mother; isn't it, uncle? Prince Charming is a pretty name. Mother says she was a real Cinderella when father left his kingdom to marry her."

"But father," added Paula, "says mother left as large a kingdom as he

did."

"She has eves like Paul's," said the

new uncle, looking at Paula.

Paul's father, looking out over the lawn this sun-filled morning at the two little girls peering into the arbor, thought of Paul's eyes even as thirty-five years ago they had looked up at him when the new baby had been put in his arms for the first time. Paul's eyes were his mother's eyes, and Paul's father had loved no other woman. They looked out at him from this girl-woman's tender little face, and wrung his

heart with old memories. Perhaps if the other Topaz Eyes had lived, his boys would have known other things he had been unable to teach them; other things beside Cinderella and Merlin. Perhaps this marriage need not have seemed so objectionable, or perhaps Paul would have forgiven the hard comment on it.

The two little girls came up on the porch, a dainty shyness enveloping them. They hesitated, dimly aware of some of the things the somberness of the man's face withheld from them.

Then Paula took courage.

"Grandfather," she said, "we want to write to mother—may we? Mother will be so lonely without us. She says she cannot stay away from us long. And we want to write to father. We do not know just where father is, but mother will send him our letters if we put them into hers. May we write—now?"

"Yes," said the man. "Yes. In the library there is paper, and there are

pens and pencils on the desk."

Paula hesitated, looking at him. Eyes like the bottom of a sunflecked brook, thought the man, with the lines of pain settling around his mouth again as if they meant to stay.

Goldilocks dipped into her store of

courage in the ensuing pause.

"But, grandfather," she said, "we cannot always spell the words. Would you—will it be too much trouble for you to help us? You—you need not come in. We can come to the window and ask you?"

"I will come in," said the man.

In the library, the new uncle was at the telephone. He hung up the receiver

as they entered.

"Nothing new," he said to his father.
"The night nurse has come, but it does
not save—his wife. She will not leave
him. She is now the only one who can
understand him. She has helped him
arrange all his business affairs. How
she keeps up I do not know. Most
other women would have lost their
heads from the first. Will you not go
—even now?"

"I will not go," said Paul's father,

"You know that I was there yesteray?"

"Yes."

"I think he tried to tell me that he hoped you would come. It is something about you and—the children. Not even his wife could make it out. She asked him if she should bring him the children. You would never have forgotten that look—yet he refused. She says he does not want them to remember him—this way—but he is thinking of them, not of himself. He will not take an opiate for fear it will befog his mind, and that he will not be able to finish the things that should be done—first."

The little girls, realizing that it was grown-up talk and not addressed to them, gave it no attention. There was so much to look at in the long, booklined room. There were wonderful paintings, and curious little statues, and roomy old chairs, beside tables piled with books. The new uncle, looking at his father, and dimly comprehensive of what had made his brother go away for what seemed a slight cause, did not notice the children. He was impatient over his halting sentences that had clothed in commonplaces the tragedy and the divinity of this fight with death, made for love's sake against incredible The older man stared out of the window, making no reply; and presently the new uncle turned to the chil-

"Are you happy here, little girls?" he asked.

Paula spoke.

"We are lonesome," she said truthfully. "Sometimes at night we can hardly stand it." Tears trembled in her long lashes. The hold on her sister's hand tightened. "But mother said we were to be brave."

"We are trying to be like mother," said Goldilocks. "Father says she is the pluckiest little girl in the world. Plucky means brave. And mother said the only way we could help her was to be happy

here."

"Humph!" said the new uncle. "You are good little girls. I never thought children could be so little trouble. I am going to town in a little bit, and I will

bring you each a doll. What kind of

doll shall it be?"

Into each little face crept a glow that somehow tightened on the heart of the new uncle as if a hand had wrung it. These things were over for Paul—and how he must have loved to bring that eager, soft look into the blue eyes and the brown.

"A baby doll," said Paula.

"A baby doll," echoed Amy. "One

with long dresses and a cap."

"He knows what a baby doll is, Amy," said Paula. "He is a grown man."

Amy sent the grown man a troubled

look.

"There is a good deal he does not know—about things little girls know—

even if he is a grown man.

The new uncle did a surprising thing. He went down from his tall height, and, for all his grown man bigness, he kissed both little girls very tenderly.

"Those things," he said, "two little girls are going to teach me, I hope."

His father sat suddenly down in one of the roomy old chairs, staring at the

floor.

"We have come in to write to mother and father," said Paula. "Grandfather is going to help us with the words. We shall not say anything about the lone-

someness."

The new uncle gave his father a steady look across the gold and brown heads, and left the room. Ten minutes later, he waited in the doorway for the dragon automobile to leave its garage lair, watching his father walking to and fro, to and fro in the library. Over white sheets of paper bent two graceful little heads, and two strained little hands were painstakingly tracing loving little words. Every now and then they looked up to ask for the spelling of a word and to proffer explanation.

"We said once to father," said Paula, "that it seemed strange to have a grandfather that we had never seen, and he said that we would both like each other when we did see each other. Would you tell him that that is true, if you

were me, grandfather?"

"If you like," said grandfather.

"But I cannot tell him unless it is true," said Paula, her honest eyes troubled. "I like you, grandfather; but do you like me? Mother says you can usually tell when people like you, but I don't think that is so of you, grandfather. You must like uncle—he is your child—yet you could not tell by the way you look. Do you like us, grandfather?"

The voice was anxious, and a little tremulous. Das ewig weibliche was

yearningly apparent.

A subtle softening invaded the pallor

of the mah's drawn face.

"Yes," he said. "Yes, I like you very much. I am glad you like me. You may write your—your father that."

Out in the hall, the new uncle found his throat aching as it had ached when he had kept himself from crying as a small boy. When would those two write again to that father they loved so well, when would they speak again of him in that tender, present way—the father who even now might be yielding up his grim hold on the minutes from whose reluctant hands he was wringing his children's future?

"Those two big, round places, grandfather, are kisses," said Goldilocks.
"One for mother and one for father.
You kiss the spots yourself, and then the one you send them to kisses them."

She leaned over the desk, her golden curls falling about the penned circles, and the sound of two kisses fell on the air. "You would not like to send one, I s'pose? Men don't kiss each other, do they?"

Grandfather shook his head. The new uncle entered the room softly.

"Little girls," he said, "I am going to mother's now. I will take your letters. They will get to father quicker."

Two joyous faces lifted themselves

from their love labors.

"Oh, may we not go with you? We—we want mother so much. Father is away on a trip to make money for us, and mother will be as lonely as—as we are. We will come back to visit you after we have seen mother."

There was a sudden silence while the two men stared at each other. Then

the older one spoke, and his competent, measured voice had grown husky.

"Not this time, little girls. But I will ask mother if you may come, and perhaps I will bring her to you. Finish your letters. I—I will go with your uncle and see your mother."

The dragon automobile puffed up to the door. Goldilocks addressed her two envelopes with an even slant downhill.

"They are not straight," she said regretfully.

Paula's letters were more even. Amy looked at them with envy.

"Mothers and fathers don't mind such things like other people do, do they, grandfather?" she reassured herself.

"Not often," said grandfather, taking the letters gently.

The children went to the porch with the men. The dragon lay panting and puffing on the driveway.

"Now," said Goldilocks gayly, "now grandfather is Merlin. He is almost the right age for it—only," regretfully, "he has no long beard. Uncle, you will have to be Perseus."

"But there is no An-drom-e-da," insisted Paula.

"Perhaps we shall find one," said the new uncle. "When I come back, I shall bring baby dolls."

"We wish we could go with you," said Goldilocks, in a last tentative effort of persuasion. "Tell mother please to come soon."

The dragon swept down the driveway to the street, where the two men turned to look at the slim little figures on the porch. They looked pathetically small and lonely, but they were hiding their disappointment over being left behind with a gallant show of waving hands.

"Oh, poor Paul, poor Paul!" said Paul's brother. "Never to look again at such a sight!"

Paul's father made no answer, but suddenly his head sank into his hands, and his hands trembled. Over every denied perception there was sweeping the vision of what love might mean—the vision that was already a clear light to Topaz Eyes and Goldilocks, brave over their own small troubles, kind in

those of others—the love that meant service and understanding.

The man dropped his hand from before his eyes, and it fell into his son's hand.

"Will there be time, my son?" he

"There will be time, father, and he needs you. We all need you, father."

The automobile moved swiftly over the space that had separated father and son for so many years, and stopped before a little green and white house, vinedraped and nested in flowers. John Denning lifted his eyes to the upstairs windows, and, finding them unshuttered and open, he drew a long breath. As the two men paused on the porch a moment, Gardiner came out. He stopped suddenly, his eyes on the father's drawn face.

"Is—he—living?" said the older man.
"Yes," Gardiner spoke slowly. "He has made the most wonderful fight I have ever known. He has controlled Death itself by sheer force of will. I do not wish to speak too soon, but—if he can keep this up—he will—he will live—live on—."

"Good God!" said John Denning.
"Live on—this way! Who could wish it for him?"

"His wife wishes it. His children will wish it when they know." "But the pain he suffers!"

"It will lessen. If he can stand an operation, we can relieve the pain. It is only that he will—never—leave his bed again—unless, well, you cannot tell even that with such a man. Almost anything is possible."

"But what a life!"

Gardiner swept the two men with indignant eyes. Both read the message of the look.

"It can be made tolerable," said Gardiner. "With such a brain as his, with such ability, with such resistance, he needs but a little help to become a power—even as he is. Half of the morning he has spent dictating, a little now and then as his strength and his suffering permitted, the plan of the work he wants to put through. This will be no burdensome invalid."

"It is our chance, John," said the father, with white, grave face. "I thank God there is a chance for him and—for us. May we see him, doctor?"

"Yes, but do not stay long. Wait, I will go back and tell Mrs. Denning you

are here."

The two men paused in the hall while Gardiner went upstairs, and presently Amy Denning came to them, a slender, deep-eyed woman, with that about her that caught at the heart with sudden pain. Yet beneath the white strain of her face there brooded the wonder of the world, love that forgets all else save that which it can give.

Paul Denning's father put out hands

grown suddenly pleading.

"My dear, my dear!" he faltered. "God bless you for what you have been and are to Paul. We have come to see if there is anything left for us to do. Perhaps you will find something for us to do for him and for you, something ever so little, it does not matter, that will make us feel that—we belong to him—and to you."

"There is much that you can do," she answered him quite simply. "Paul thinks that only you can help him with his work in the way he hopes to have it done. He will be glad to see you.

The children?"

"Father," said John Denning, "you go up to Paul. I will stay here a moment to talk with Amy about the chil-

dren."

When Paul Denning's wife and brother went upstairs to his room they found his father seated beside the swathed figure in the bed, listening with rapt face to the faltering words with which the injured man was outlining some plan dear to him. It was as if the two men had not had to bridge the silence of years and of unkindness by any other help than the great need of both. Gardiner stood near watching his patient closely.

"I can put that through for you, Paul," his father was saying. "It is splendidly thought out. You could always see years ahead of the other fellow. It was the greatest blow our business had when we lost you. It is a great scheme! The finishing touch! I will start it going to-day—in an hour—while they are not expecting it. Yes, yes, I will keep in touch with you every minute. You shall watch it grow as if you were there yourself."

He looked up at the two figures in

the door.

"John," he said quickly, "call Mason on the phone—Mason the president of the telephone company; you know him. Say you are speaking for me; that he must get a private wire in here by tomorrow with an attachment Paul can use himself. You can use your left hand, Paul?"

The faint shadow of a smile touched the pain-drawn face on the pillow. Gardiner nodded reassuringly at Amy

Denning's questioning look.

"It is a great scheme," Paul's father went on. "I am glad you will let me in on it. It will be good work."

He rose.

"The children, father?" said Paul Denning slowly. "What are they do-

ing?"

"Paul"—his father's voice shook for the first time—"Paul, they are wonderful children—so sweet—so brave—so tender. I have never had any little girls, you know. You must lend them to me sometimes. John has letters to you from them."

Paul's wife came softly to the bed. His father gave his son's face, and the pathetic figure beneath the covers, a

long look.

"I think," he said gently, "that the children would like to see you. I think they would understand. They are very sweet about their visit to us, but it is not easy for them, and they are—a little worried. You are going to get well, Paul, and so—and so—

He turned away, unable to control his voice, and Paul's eyes met his wife's.

"I will bring them, dear," she said softly. "I will go for them myself, and I will tell them about it on the way back here. They—oh, Paul—you are in no way different; you will not seem so to them. They—they will be so glad to help, dear. They love you so."

She let her hand fall on the un-

maimed hand that lay on the cover, and there was a moment's silence.

"Yes," said Paul at length. John Denning turned to Gardiner.

"May I go back now with Mrs. Denning and bring the children? We left them asking us to 'Tell mother to come soon.'"

Gardiner looked at the man on the

"I should like to see them now," said Paul, "To-day."

Gardiner turned to Amy Denning.

"And I shall be glad to have you go
out even for a half hour," he said. "I
will stay while you are gone."

When they had gone, Paul Denning spoke to Gardiner.

"Brian, you are telling me the truth?"

"Absolutely, Paul. We will operate to-morrow, perhaps, if you are ready for it. You have—years of life before you—useful, busy years. You can work—here—every day as well as if you were in your office. You will see your children grow into lovely women."

Gardiner paused, weighing the doubt in the haggard face below him.

"You will not be a burden, Paul, but a help. You will be the support and the head of your family. They need you, all of them. And do you not see what you will be to your father and your brother? You will remake both their lives—you and your wife and the little

girls. Let me unfold the paper for you."

For Paul had made no answer, holding the two little letters his brother had given him in his unhurt hand. When he finished reading the halting little sentences, he closed his eyes and lay for many minutes so quietly that Gardiner shook his head at the nurse as she entered the room, and she went quietly away. Then Paul Denning lifted the little letters to his lips at the places where two big circles lay penned, labeled: "A kiss."

"God!" said Gardiner below his breath, and the word was almost a prayer. And as he said it, the door downstairs opened quietly, and two soft little voices said: "May we go up now, mother, right away?"

Paul Denning opened his eyes. Gardiner moved away to the end of the

There were light footsteps on the stairs; a moment's pause in the door, where two gallant little figures, with faces white and yearning, waited a moment to find the eyes straining toward them from the bed. Soft little hands flew out.

"Father! Father!" came the gentle, childish voices. "Oh, father, we are so glad you have come home to us. We were so lonesome without you, father, dear."



JOURNEY'S END

THROUGH darkest nights one star Leads me to where you are. A flower casts on the air Its fragrance; you are there.

Yet is all incomplete Until I reach your feet. As love and faith stand sure, So shall this quest endure.

Nor flowers nor stars need be, When I find all in thee; When Journey's End shall bring A bourne to wandering.

ALICE COREY.





HAVE suspected you of the black art this long time, but never thought your familiar owned the weather bureau," Lytton said mock reproach-

fully to Mrs. Allan as sheeted rain pelted the windows of the limousine.

She shook her head at him, saying apologetically to Fontroy, her host and the car's owner:

"Please don't mind him. Being a poet, he always wants more than his share of things—and you know I insisted upon eating all my chicken livers en brochette."

"I see. October is the real time for treachery—in weather and women," Lytton ran on. "Never saw a finer morning; it promised joy every way. But I ought to have known better than to trust it. You had told me you meant to back Malvolio in the Goodspeed."

"What has that to do with it?" Fontroy asked, chiefly for the sake of saying something.

Lytton laughed, a soft, chuckling cadence.

"'When the skies fall, we catch larks,'" he quoted softly. "Mudlarks, you know. Malvolio is the king of all mudlarks, as this wise lady knows."

"He can win in any sort of going if only he chooses. And to-day he is going to choose. I feel it in my bones," Mrs. Allan retorted.

Lytton sighed portentously, and laid his hand upon his breast pocket, saying: "Temptress, avaunt! You know I have real money here, the price of three alleged poems, written to—your daughter."

"So it is a case of my daughter and your ducats. Thank you. I didn't know," Mrs. Allan flung back. Then to her daughter, at whom Fontroy was looking hard: "Hear that, Rosalind! I hope you are properly grateful."

"D'ye mean that? You chaff so much—you two," Fontroy began.

Lytton cut him short.

"It's the frozen truth," he said airily.
Then a hint of earnestness creeping under his lightness: "Verse of every sort is, you know, only an echo of—the most beautiful, the most moving things in life."

"Leave wisdom to the owl, Dicky. It sits so ill upon you," Mrs. Allan protested.

She, too, had looked hard at Rosalind. It had a little alarmed her to see a faint red waver in the girl's clear pallor.

Rosalind was young, barely rising eighteen, convent bred, and only a month in her mother's house. She had wide, innocent eyes, was light on her feet, and graceful as a willow wand in ruffling winds. She had, further, the classic lengths, along with a suppleness that redeemed her angularity. A creature of magnificent potentialities, her mother felt. Fontroy felt it no less. It was his dearest hope to be the means of making her realize them. He had

been for years on a friendly, familiar footing with Rosalind's mother, who was unconventional enough to appraise people by what they were rather than what they had, and never to remember their lacks or possessions against them. She had thus not remembered against Fontroy his several millions, or the friends who had accused her of angling desperately for him. She had even only laughed over his own early wariness. How was he to know until she made it plain to him she was not setting traps matrimonial for his gold-laden feet? So many women did set traps, she had not blamed him. It had been pleasant to see him lose suspicion and let himself go. There was a man, a real man, underneath the millionaire, just as there was a real man underneath the frothy lightness of Richard Lytton. lawyer by profession and poet by prepossession.

Both had been free of her house, a small, clean, delightfully bare house upon a side street. There was money enough to fill it with modest luxury, so long as the mistress of it lived alone. Modest luxury for one may mean only decent penury for two, when both are women, and share a fine feeling for lace and chiffons. Moreover, a large part of Mrs. Allan's capital had been sunk in an annuity, so there was reason she should be anxious to establish her

daughter, quickly and well.

She was a good mother

She was a good mother, no less a good fellow. She had been hospitably given to the society of other good fellows. Regretfully she had realized, after Rosalind came, that some of the good fellows were impossible, with a young lady in the house. She herself might flout and defy "They say," and all its works, but Rosalind must be held above, apart from, all chances of gossiping tongues.

Notwithstanding, in reckonings over her child's future, Mrs. Allan had been singularly blind as to what Fontroy might mean. It had given her almost a shock to see him palpably hit. It was no more than she had expected to have Lytton bowled over at almost the first glance. Dicky was the lover born, his ineligibility only adding fuel to the flame of his temperament.

At first she had been a little apprehensive. Later, finding that their rivalry did not make the two men openly hostile, she had rather rejoiced in it. Rosalind had played with them beautifully, developing aptitudes inherited from a line of high-bred coquettes. There had been about her nothing of Cinderella—rather, she was the fairy princess, coming suddenly into a kingdom that offered such modern diversions as horses, theater parties, a yacht, and motor cars galore, not to name the admiring glances of various and sundry masculine persons whom her two lovers had brought in to do her homage.

"She's the Eighth Wonder of the World," Lytton had said to her mother, watching Rosalind queen it, yet never lose her elusive virginal charm.

"You mean, she is a thoroughbred," Mrs. Allan had retorted. "She is only showing what belongs to her blood."

To Fontroy, she had never made intimate comments upon her girl. He needed to be held rather hard; made to understand that here the weight of his millions could not give him impossible opportunity. Such a course was intuitive with Rosalind's mother; but if she had calculated chances with the utmost nicety, she could not have hit upon one better calculated to make Fontroy eager to propose.

He would have done it before this but for lack of opportunity. The day's outing had been planned in hope of achieving it. Country-club luncheons had grown commonplace. Therefore Fontroy had aimed to have something out of the commonplace at a road house he had discovered a good ways out of town. There was a fine highway to it—broad, and hard, and white.

"The road that leads to destruction," Lytton had said severely as they bowled over it.

But ill luck had met them at the piazza, hung with frost-nipped vines, and had dogged them ever since.

What are incomparable viands when the cocktails are execrable, the wine vile? Rosalind had only laughed over

such mischances. She drank nothing more potent than milk and vichy. But Fontroy had fumed suppressedly. galled him to have anything he had planned turn out badly. It had not improved his temper to find, when they were again on the way, that they must go roundabout several miles because of road improvement. Speeding had led to an encounter with a village constable, and a detention of half an hour. After it, Fontroy, left to himself, would have gone straight to the city, but he could not suggest it, knowing the others had their hearts set on seeing the Goodspeed won and lost.

He himself had felt a certain tepid interest in it, although he was no racing man. Another man, one out of luck, had induced him to put down a couple of thousands upon a Goodspeed candidate, which, the other avouched, could not lose. Fontroy had made the wager as a sort of charity, saying offhandedly: "We are partners in this, of course, and here's fifty for your trouble." The tipster had flushed a little, but had pocketed the money in silence. By that Fontroy knew his desperate need of it.

Yet the fact that he had money up had no part in his disgust over the sudden rainstorm. It came at the very worst time—when the car was crawling and bumping over a clayey short cut, by which alone they could hope to reach Green Park in time. There was only a mile of the clay road; but, being already damp and rutted, a minute of the heavy downpour sufficed to make it slimy, yet holding. Pierre, the French chauffeur, was a master of his art, yet he could do no more than make the car—like himself, imported—crawl forward at a snail's gallop.

Lytton, gazing pensively through the window beside him, murmured softly:

"I wonder if aëroplanes are ever real mudlarks? If they are, well, I think I had better get out and charter one since we have got the money." This to Mrs. Allan: "It will be a shame not to have a run for it."

"It will when I earned mine—a whole hundred dollars—by wearing hats I made myself. And I haven't made a bet this year," Mrs. Allan answered in his own key.

Lytton flung up his hands.

"Heroism! Thy name is henceforth Allan!" he said. "I say that—remembering some of the hats."

"You wicked slanderer! My mother never wears anything that is not beauti-

ful!" Rosalind flung at him.

He bowed gravely.

"Because she wears it, dear girl," he said softly. "She has a knack of glorifying everything—even us, her friends."

"What wickedness are you planning, Dicky, that you are trying to win my forgiveness thus in advance?" Mrs.

Allan asked merrily.

Dicky shut one eye. He was above

the suspicion of winking.

"I am developing the filial among other aptitudes for devotion," he said, with a glance at Rosalind that made Fontroy want to strangle him.

Mrs. Allan caught it, and interposed quickly, smiling at Fontroy as she

spoke.

"Your turn now to say something nice to me. Remember, one's appetite for compliments increases in just the ratio that the compliments themselves decrease."

"Will it do if I say you are Rosalind's mother?" Fontroy asked, a little

tremor in his voice.

It was the first time he had ever spoken the girl's name aloud, except in the privacy of his own apartment. Mrs. Allan made him a gay little bow.

"You win—hands down," she said, laughing softly. "It is something—a great deal, indeed—to have a daughter who shows that you were once worth

looking at."

Through the splash of the rain, the hurtling of the sudden wind, there came the noise of bursting tires. Three wheels had gone simultaneously out of commission, victims to sharp flints imbedded treacherously in the red ooze. The car ran by momentum a yard or two, then stopped dead. Lytton flung open the door next him,

"Here is where I cease to be an orna-

ment of society," he said. "No," to Fontroy, "you stay snug. Pierre can't speak two words of English. Be easy. my children. I will save you. If not in an airship, then in a mere horse car-

He wheeled about at the last word. but the footing was treacherous. He fell to his knees. In a wink he had recovered himself, and stood in the gusty rain, looking down at himself, and say-

'If only I could keep on acquiring real estate at this rate, I shouldn't need

to envy any mere millionaire."

Mrs. Allan shook her fist at him. "Hurry!" she said imperatively. might not mind missing a fair-weather race, but I have simply got to see this one.

"Why, the horses will hardly be able to raise a dogtrot," Fontroy said fretfully. "They won't be worth looking at. You had better let me take you

home."

"And miss what is going to be a famous Goodspeed! My dear man, you have no sporting blood at all," Mrs. Allan answered, shaking her head. love to back mudlarks—this is the day for them. They don't always win for me; but it is such joy to watch the game creatures trying, trying against any odds. A fair-weather horse is about like a fair-weather friend. Anybody can be beautifully decent when everything goes right; but the creature which does its best for you, its hopeless, desperate best, that is the one I love."

"I didn't know you were so deep a social philosopher." Fontroy said, the suspicion of a sneer about his mouth.

It was thin-lipped but well cut. His face, indeed, had a certain distinction, in spite of being pallid and to a degree elderly. He had blue eyes that somehow suggested ice, was tall, very straight, and always the pink and pattern of tailor-made elegance. A bachelor, notoriously difficult, master of a courtesy so cold and polished the waggish said it was imported directly from the north pole, he had yet a human side. Theretofore, Mrs. Allan had seen only the human side. This glacial glimpse in

a manner affronted her-notwithstanding, after it, she smiled.

Rosalind would make him over. make him wholly and forever human. He was so deep in love with her, so eager to parade the fact. Clearly he did not for a minute think of Lytton as a rival. Such a state of things must be, to him, unbelievable.

Mrs. Allan tried hard not to hear what he was saying as he leaned toward her daughter; but, in spite of herself, caught words and phrases of entreaty. Evidently he was asking something portentous. Rosalind sat flushing and paling, now a lovely rose red, now waxen as a camelia. But she did not once look up. She had no need to. Before her mental vision there stood plain two images-Fontroy, spare and colorless, yet bearing all good gifts. Lytton, as spare, but vital throughout, with only a poet's empty hands.

As in a dream, shivering a little now and then, she heard Fontroy saying:

"It is a shame—going on. Your first race ought to be worth while. Say Ascot—for the Gold Cup—if you will but let me take you. Glencairn and the duchess-she is my cousin, you knowwill make things easy. You shall be We can go in the royal presented. You'll like that, I know. inclosure. Think it over. Please. You-youknow what I mean-what I feel. I-I am-not good at talking-but you shall have—anything you care about."
"Good news! The rain is over—and

here comes Dicky," Mrs. Allan broke in, partly to relieve the tension.

She had not heard all, but enough to rouse her protective instinct.

Rosalind stirred as a charmed bird might do.

"I wonder if I was dreaming," she said, flushing deeper.

The door opened. Dicky thrust his

head in through it, chanting:
"Make haste! There is yet time. Race has been put back half an hour on account of the storm. Found out over the phone where I got this rig. Talk of good Samaritans-they are not in it with this good fellow, whose private carryall will just barely hold us."

Speaking, he had caught Rosalind's hand. He felt it thrill in his clasp, yet she drew it gently away. In a wink, the carryall was floundering away with its load. Dicky, sitting with the driver, and chuckling as he flicked mud cakes off his trousers.

"I shan't tell anybody I came down in your car. I'm nothing if not grateful," he said over his shoulder to Fontroy, crouching at the feet of the ladies.

Fontroy growled inarticulately. He could not trust himself to speak. Least of all to Rosalind, who had relapsed, it

seemed, into a dream.

She was still dreaming when they reached the stand, a stand but three parts full of folk limp or drenched. So many were packed in the clubhouse, Mrs. Allan would not go there. The paddock was so oozy, it was likewise out of the question.

The Goodspeed candidates were there, under the sheds, saddled and ready for the call to post. They were five strong—before the storm they had been twelve. The remnant showed so fit, so fettlesome, it was piteous to think of them running under gray, threatening skies, over a lifeless track, fetlock deep in oily, half fluid slush.

Rosalind sat at her mother's elbow. Lytton stood in front of them, fingering his wallet, and saying dramatically to

Mrs. Allan:

"Behold my worldly wealth! Does the wise lady still say Malvolio for burning it up? Or does she pick a winner after the manner of women, by knowing nothing about horses?"

"I know horses, being a breeder's daughter," Mrs. Allan answered, laughing. "Also, by such heredity, somewhat as to the rules for plunging. Anything better than threes is a good bet—even

if you lose it."

"I thought ladies all loved the long shots. Nothing in this is at more than fives," Fontroy said, turning from the commissioner he had beckoned to him. "But I'm playing in great luck. Hot Scotch, whom I backed at fours, has gone to evens."

"No wonder. Hot Scotch, the right

brand, can stand a lot of water," Lytton commented gleefully.

Mrs. Allan looked at him in mild

reproof.

"Go straight and get our money down on Malvolio. I hear he is going at fives," she said. "And he's much the best horse, in spite of the track, in spite of carrying top weight."

"Hooray! He gets my hundred, same as yours!" Lytton cried. "But what—what shall I do with my ill-gotten wealth—when he wins?"

"Oh, you can elope on it," Mrs. Allan

retorted.

Again he shut one eye.

"That requires thought," he said.
"You see, my trouble will be to decide betwixt you and—Rosalind."

"Haven't you a choice?" Fontroy asked of Rosalind as Lytton swung

away

Mrs. Allan interposed with gentle dignity.

"Rosalind must be 'a looker-on in Vienna.' She will never bet, with my approval, until after she is married."

Fontroy smiled approvingly. It was no small part of Rosalind's charm that she had been so tremendously well brought up. Before he could speak his satisfaction, the bugle sounded, drawing the people listlessly to their feet, only to settle back to place as listlessly, after finding out that they could see, thus seated, the mettled creatures parading by, each carrying somebody's hope or fortune.

There was languid clapping, strongest for Gunga Din, black, five years old, and eminently worthy his great sire, Watercress. Hot Scotch, a deep, glancing chestnut, Strathmore's best son, and four years old, was next in favor. Despite their age, both had feathers on their backs. They had been saved and specially pointed for the Goodspeed, the latest, and almost the richest, of the big handicaps. Thus the handicapper had been in a manner forced to favor them.

Not so Malvolio, who had run all season, and won all down the line. A sorrel, with four white stockings, a blocky body, a long neck, a pensile, lower lip, and a rat tail, he had been so clownish even as a foal as to earn his name. Yet he was St. Blaise's grandson, through an undistinguished sire, and on the dam's side ran straight to the immortal Lexington. He went by mincingly, as though fearing to stumble over his own feet, or deeply oppressed by the weight he carried.

longuil and Sanddown, who came at his heels, were good to look at, every way a credit to the Mirthful strain. Deep brown as to coat, well made, finished to the last degree, they had shown they could go and stay upon a fast track; but were, to a degree, unknown quantities in the mud. Notwithstanding, they had been left in, having but light weight up. Indeed, Malvolio was the only one of the heavyweighted division who had not declined the issue after the storm. Hence his price, hence also the fact that, although he had run and won for half those looking on, they passed him up as a supernumerary, if not an impertinence.

"He'd be carryin' my coin if this was a sprint; but not at no mile and a half, with a hundred and thirty in saddle," a fat man beside Fontroy commented al-

most angrily.

Fontroy nodded. Mrs. Allan frowned.

"You'll see," she said loyally. "What is a mile and a half to a real racer?"

"A heap too much—that's what I say," the fat man answered fretfully. "Watch that start, will ye? Backin', and fillin', and linin' up same as it was all a circus—and money burnin' up

every second."

"Our money, perhaps," Lytton broke in, coming to them flushed and breathless. "We've got real odds, wise lady—post odds—six to one. We also have got a beautiful chance to lose. Many, many benevolent persons told me so—I don't in the least know why."

"Oh! Your look invites admonition," Mrs. Allan retorted, laughing.

Lytton turned to Rosalind. Fontroy, beside her, was saying eagerly:

"You didn't answer me about Ascot. Suppose we let the race decide it? If my horse wins—remember, I'm risking on him all I am and have—you are to let me take you."

"'Bject," Lytton said in his deepest legal voice before Rosalind could an-

She did not want to answer. She was still in a daze. But she rallied gallantly, saying to the two of them:

"I wish you'd be human—not talk like wax works. To punish you, I shall neither look at nor speak to you until

the race is over."

As the two men fell back, she put up her glass, fixing it on the fretting, plunging creatures at the start, yet hardly seeing them. A mist swam before her, her breath came quickly. For all she had held herself so jauntily, she felt herself in the grip of Fate. Lytton appealed to her dominantly. Fontroy stood for the most wonderful opportunity. She had quick ambitions, reaching aspirations. Even amid the white quiet of the convent she had had dreams of waking to find herself a great lady.

Unwittingly, the good sisters had fed the dreams. They had let her know they felt she was different to the mass

of their pupils.

"When you are rich and powerful, you will not forget God's poor. You will be always doing good," Sister Monica had said over and over.

Then there had run through all her mother's talk since she came home a thread of new color—a hinting at high destiny. She had thrilled to catch the hint. Now she translated it concretely into Fontroy. She dropped the glass, shot a glance at him, and turned away her head.

Thus she did not see the breakaway, only heard the crying: "Off! They're

off!"

As the raucous drone of it died to rustling silence, the racers came catapulting down course, the clots of gaudy color upon their backs changing swiftly to earthy dun. As they ran past the stand, only the front rider was humanly cognizable. The others were gnomelike, splotched and blotched all over. Yet the pace was slow—hardly more than a hand gallop.

Rosalind had seen a hundred more thrilling races in her grandfather's pastures, where colts ran on courage, free

of whip or rein.

To think so much depended on it! She knew it traditionally. Granddad had told her of being there. She also wanted to be there. Life was ruled by contraries. She cared most for Lytton. By the very feeling she was bound not to make herself a millstone about his neck. He would forget her, and quickly, find some other luckier girl. And she would be glad. There she shut her eyes tight, not to open them until she heard a great, growling shout,

The race was half run, and everybody was standing breathless. She saw, out in the back stretch, four horses paired, running desperately in the wake of a leader two lengths to the good. The pairs hugged the rail, the flying leader tore straight down the middle of the course. What with the mud, the rain glimmers, all five were but shooting blurs, notwithstanding there was no doubt as to who led. Malvolio, abso-lutely last at the stand, had but warmed to his work in the six furlongs, and had passed the others in a few mighty strides. His name was cried aloud all about-in joy, in anger, in defiant regret.

"Name o' God, what's his boy thinkin' about?" the fat man demanded of Fontroy, pounding him vigorously as he spoke: "He knows his chance. It's to wait, and let the others run themselves off their feet-with anything left then, the clown horse might come on

and win.'

"Maybe the boy thinks of winning. Isn't that the main thing?" Lytton asked suavely before Fontroy could speak. "Or does one have to mind the rules of

the game?"

"Humph! You must 'a' bet on the clown-you think yourself so mighty smart," the fat man returned angrily. "But just you wait a wee. Gunjy'll come front then-come to stay."

"Not if his boy can help it. Too much money on Gunjy," another man said, with a chuckling sneer.

Mrs. Allan laughed, half sighing at

the end. She had a good glass, a trained vision. "Gunga's boy is doing all a boy can," she said. "But he will hardly be even in the money. win," to Fontroy, "Hot Scotch is coming again. See him lock my poor Malvolio, with Jonquil right at his flank! Now! Now! They're swinging for home, hardly heads apart! Poor, poor Malvolio! You'd never let them beat you if you had not thirty pounds the worst of it."

Fontroy watched the race, his forehead beaded, his heart pounding, then at the last stopping dead almost. He was no sportsman-the gamester's ardor he had never known-but he yearned to win; not for the profit, but for the omen. Rosalind had not agreed to his suggested wager; but then she had not said "No" to it, and her eyes had been distinctly kind. She should dispense his winnings-and how much more?-in charity. She should have a life that would be one perpetual fairy tale. It seemed to him he had been waiting for her, for her only, since the beginning; that she was his one possible

and predestined mate.

He looked at her, rather than the struggling racers. She was white as death; but her eves were glued to the glass. At long and at last, the struggle had laid hold on her. Her heart in her throat, she was crying spiritually to Malvolio, as those about her were crying aloud. So unfairly weighted, vet running so gallantly through that heartbreaking last quarter, neither swerving nor faltering, but straight as ever a bullet sped. She did not think, did not care, who won or lost over him. It was the race itself, the race now so close she could mark the staring eyeballs, the ears laid back, note the straining stretch, the swift, upleaping gather, eloquent of heroic speed and stay.

Three horses swept past the distance flag, the last furlong pole, on, on, on to the finish line! Jonquil, hindmost, lapped Hot Scotch to the saddle skirts. Malvolio ran still a neck to the good. If he held it -- He must hold it! He would! Ecstatically Rosalind saw him go down, down, down, stretching as

though his blocky shape were india rubber, and come up, gaining a foot. He needed it. In the next lap, the Strath-more colt gained as much, but the effort was too much. He hung even, faltering in stride. Jonquil ran even with him-she seemed sure of the placewhen up from behind sailed Gunga Din to nip her on the post, just as Malvolio's long neck went first over the line.

"Are we the people? Are we?" Lytton demanded of Mrs. Allan. "Tell me, please. Though I think I know.'

"Imbecile! Go get our moneyquick! You know how long it takes, and we should be getting home," Mrs. Allan said, a little unsteadily.

She had looked furtively at Rosalind throughout the race. Mother instinct had told her some measure of the battle raging in her girl's mind. She put a protective arm over Rosalind's shoulder as she spoke to Lytton. Lytton fronted her, smiling an odd, tranquil smile.

"I know I am deliciously in the way," he said. "But before we talk of mere money, let's settle this other wager."

"What do you mean?" Mrs. Allan asked, trying to speak lightly.

"Rosalind knows," Lytton said, half extending his hand.

Fontroy stood over against him, his eyes, full of supplication, fixed on Rosalind.

She looked from one to the other, and began to tremble. She had thought her mind was quite made up. She would take the chance of Ascot, and all that went with it; know to the full the joy of power, and riches, and worldly honors; and one self within her had been

happy in the decision. Now there was The part of her that had gone out to the overweighted, struggling racer, that had joyed to see him win against bitter odds, dominated her imperiously, held her from the word, the gesture that would assure her a high destiny.

She was no angel, only a girl, singularly clean-minded and clear-hearted. Ashen-faced, she fought her battle until

Lytton took her hand.

"It's a pity-about Ascot, and the inclosure," he said gently. "But next summer, at Coney, you shall ride the giddy-go-round ever so many times. I'll begin saving money for it the day after New Year. To-day's illgotten gains we will squander on a honeymoon."

"Rosalind-can you, will you-throw me over for-a poet?" Fontroy asked hoarsely but hardly above his breath.

Rosalind shook like a leaf in a storm. but bowed her head silently. She realized all she was giving up; but, womanlike, now that she had given it up, took joy in the sacrifice. Fontroy could give her everything save the joy of love returned. Lytton, who carried overweight in his poverty and his poetic inclination, could give her only himself and his heart; yet they sufficed. would laugh with her over a crust, if ever it came to crusts. Fontroy had shown her he was likely to growl over a crumpled rose leaf.

Therefore, she let her hand lie in Lytton's clasp, the while she said softly:

"I suppose you have forgotten, Mr. Fontroy, that every girl has a phase of worshiping poetry-and poets."



THE COMING OF LOVE

MOONLIGHT stroll beside some singing sea, A pause, a glance, a moment's thrill and fire-Life is no more as it was wont to be, Nor is death older than this new desire!

CHARLES C. JONES.



THE WHITE MAN'S HERITAGE Nalbro Bartley



ALDWELL was transferred to the Island of Negros—to a shabby scrap of a post surrounded with prosperous haciendas owned by wealthy

Filipino farmers. The Powers That Be at Manila gave no reason for the transfer, and Caldwell, who had learned to wait until the Powers offered a reason, asked no questions, but left Leyte instanter.

There was little about the place to please him, and still less about the miserable settlers, who cringed under the tyrannous hand of the rice planters. This was a new type of Filipino that he watched driving his Negrito slaves from early dawn until the heat struck in and commanded rest. Having been used to meek muchacho boys and the humble coast tao, he was inclined to write a long letter to Manila explaining why they had made a bad bull in letting the Negros people have any rights whatsoever.

But after the first pang of homesickness for Tacloban and the boys had throbbed itself away, it occurred to Caldwell that the Powers planned more carefully than the Tacloban constabulary had given them credit for. And the following day the handwriting on the wall was legible.

Beside Caldwell, the post boasted of an army surgeon, who was in love with a girl in Seattle, and who moped periodically, little Eddie Hoefler, the subaltern, and Arthur Heath, Caldwell's second lieutenant. Caldwell had known the army surgeon before, and no love was lost between them; little Eddie Hoefler fell in line because of his irrepressible good nature, while a genuine friendship sprang up between Heath and his superior officer. Being a tall, splendid specimen of physical perfection, Heath commanded considerable attention about the barrio, and the Filipino planters stood in awe of him.

When ugly stories of Negrito abuse floated to the comandancia, it was Heath who went to the haciendas, and made the owners quail in their boots. All of which was not especially to Heath's credit. He was simply gifted with the magnetic ability to control weaker minds, the power of dominating a situation or an individual. Because his early environment had been of the best, he dominated whatever came his way in the uplift path.

The Powers knew that Caldwell—well, they knew enough to make Caldwell Heath's superior officer, and to send both these men down to the heart of the Negros Cordillero to settle one of the problems that the Associated Press never gets the first punctuation mark about.

Heath, who had been at the post some months before Caldwell came, took the

latter on an inspection tour of the barrio. Returning, Caldwell asked if they ever had any decent music happen

around.

much," "Not answered Heath. stretching himself leisurely on the red banig mat. "Not much! One time Eddie Hoefler got an idea he was developing a tenor voice, and we almost took a hammer and nails to drive it out. Another time old Carlos, the native that begs, started to give singing lessons to the Negritos-do you get that?-singing lessons to the Negritos! Sancho, the richest planter in the barrio, wanted to pull his teeth out one by one. cho's awful amiable at times."

"Thanks," said Caldwell meekly. "I just wanted to get a line on things. In Leyte I had a phonograph; it was a little rusted, but we used to have good times with it. I wish I had it here."

"There is one person who can sing," added Heath, in a lower voice, "and just one. But we won't be able to hear her,

I'm afraid."

Caldwell straightened up abruptly. Heath was too good-looking to speak of a native woman in that tone, and not have disastrous results.

"Who is she?" he demanded.

"Gemma. Gemma, the wife of this same pleasant Sancho, who is one of the filthiest planters the island owns, one of the meanest, most contemptible curs that the government is responsible for. But his wife is beautiful. She's half Spanish, of course, and they say her mother was an opera singer."

"Why can't we hear her?"

Heath chuckled-not a pleasant

chuckle, either.

"Because Sancho keeps her inside four walls mostly, except when he gets drunk and beats her outside. Occasionally he lets her go to church, and then she chants a bit. It's worth listening to, Caldwell, like an organ being played at twilight."

"And she's beautiful?"

The younger man closed his eyes.

"Yes," he said simply.

But Caldwell knew that, as he had spoken, a picture of the striking Span-

ish-native beauty was stamped across his very consciousness.

"Why don't some one lead Sancho outside and whisper that it's bad form to beat one's wife?"

An ugly look crossed Heath's face, and he gripped the slippery straw of the

banig mat tightly.

"Because nothing short of a Krag carbine would impress Sancho. Do you think one American could make that beast treat his wife as well as we treat our dogs? God, Caldwell, you've been living in Levte, not Negros. Down here the Filipino is supreme—the Negrito is his slave, his cat's-paw, his clown, whatever he chooses. The Spaniard is a curiosity, the American tolerated. You don't find as rich plantations anywhere else in the islands as you do here, and they're owned and controlled by the Filipino, worked and sweated over by the Negrito, too cowed to stand for his Do you think Manila knows rights. this? Do you think-

He broke off abruptly, the veins standing out on his tanned forehead.

Caldwell smiled in the dusk.

"No, I don't know Negros," he admitted quietly. "That is why they sent me here. But I might be able to grasp a few vital facts concerning it. See here, Heath, we weren't stationed here for our health. What's the game? What's the trouble?"

Heath shrugged his shoulders. "You've got me," he answered. "But

whatever it is-

"It won't help Gemma," finished Caldwell quickly. "Don't be too sure about that. Oh, I know that's what you were thinking—don't jump—it's as plain as if you shouted it to the hills. It's Gemma, not the downtrodden Negrito, that makes your blood boil."

Heath hesitated before he answered thickly:

"Well, suppose it is-what then?"

"Nothing desperate. Only don't be on the squaw man's list—you know how that turns out."

"I don't intend to," retorted Heath.
"But I can't stand by and see a beautiful
woman with a mind and soul far supe-

rior to any native's on the island being abused. Could you?"

"No," admitted Caldwell. "No, I couldn't. Let's go up to the hacienda and call on Sancho. We might get around him some way."

Reluctantly, Heath consented. They left the army surgeon and Eddie Hoefler playing cribbage inside the comandancia as they made their way over the rough

trail skirting the barrio proper. Under a clump of coconut trees, some one was talking to a group of men. It was Tota, Sancho's Negrito overseer. He was standing on a rotted tree stump, his black face alight with enthusiasm, his stunted body fairly quivering with Neither Heath nor Caldwell passion. understood the language. The people drew back as the men approached, and Caldwell saw that they were all Negritos, semislaves on the various rice plantations.

Something about Tota's manner made Caldwell wish to understand the dialect. "What's the row?" Heath asked a

young Negrito boy.

"Tota make poem," the boy answered in Spanish. "Tota is a poet."

"Poem about what?"

"Freedom," the boy admitted proudly. Caldwell broke through the ring of listeners.

"Tota, get down off your perch and go to bed," he said sharply. "You're spouting nonsense. Come on-we're going up to see Sancho. Better walk

along.

The enthusiasm died out of the black face, and the slanting eyes quivered an-Then the humpbacked form jumped down, saying something in a dialect to the audience. A moment later, and the crowd disappeared. Caldwell placed Tota between Heath and himself.

"You like work on the hacienda?" he asked him, as they strolled on.

Tota glanced up shyly.

"Look!" he said, pulling back his gged sleeve. "Look!"

ragged sleeve.

In the moonlight they saw a long, jagged wound, caused by a lash. Dirt had been rubbed into the open flesh, and it had started to fester. The other sleeve was pulled back, and a similar mark exposed. Tota walked on without

"What did you do to be punished?" persisted Caldwell, who knew the wiles of the employee.

Tota blinked his slanting eyes in si-

lence. Then he said:

"I do? Nothing. I faint from the sun. My master cures me.

There was a ring of truth in his voice

that made the men believe.

"Pretty raw," remarked quietly. "And I think he's sincere." "How many of you chaps are there

in the hills?" Caldwell asked him. Again the ominous quiver of the eyes.

"Enough," he told him.

"Does Sancho ever treat you decently,

ever do the square thing?'

"You, an Americano, the man who takes care of the islands-what would you do if I tell? Help us? No. You send us to be shot, to be burned-

"Rubbish! That's a lot of stuff Sancho tells you to keep your mouth shut. Now, listen to me. We'll make Sancho treat you fairly if you'll---

But Tota wrenched himself free from the other's grasp. He sped away in the darkness, Caldwell and Heath ex-

changed nonplused glances.

"You see, don't you?" asked Caldwell. "This is what the Powers have scented—a Negrito uprising against the Filipino, and of course the Filipino is the-

"Oh, the Filipino's the baby child, the infant lamb, and has to have protection," finished Heath. "Naturally the idea of the Negrito conquering the United States is a fit subject for Punch. But at the same time it would be nasty to lose good men and barrios all because of the dwarfs."

"What do you say to a peace conference?" suggested Caldwell.

"Is that a joke?"

"Not at all. I mean if anything serious breaks. On my word, Heath, my heart is with the Negrito. He's been cheated out of his rights for so many hundred years that he's almost forgotten to be indignant. What our forefathers did to the Indian, the Filipino has done to the Negrito, and because they resent being made slaves of, deprived of the right to live like a healthy carabao, we must swoop in on 'em and kill off the remnants of the tribe. Isn't that a fair stating of the question? Can you blame the little chaps?"

"No. Only we can't become sentimental over a handful of monstrosities."

"If the same monstrosities want to, they can do some good work. They know the cordillero as no one else knows it; they can hide there for weeks if they choose. They can burn and torture good and proper, and rip things up here as badly as a baby earthquake. I'm going to sound old Sancho about it now."

The hacienda was in sight, and the men walked silently between the great rows of trees and shrubbery, past the nipa huts, where the Negritos existed, to the flat, squat house of Sancho.

Sancho was sitting outside, rolling cigarettes and becoming gloriously drunk on rum. He was alone, as far as the men could see.

"Welcome, señors," he began, making elaborate sweeps of the hand. "Get up," he added, poking a bundle at his feet. "Get mats and more rum."

The bundle, a half-grown Negrito boy, staggered to his feet, and disappeared in the narrow doorway.

"Who is that?" Caldwell asked languidly.

Sancho chuckled, his fat brown cheeks shaking with unrepressed merriment.

"Baba—Tota's cousin. Fine fun!
I'm going to have him sing for you."

"You employ mostly Negrito labor, then?" continued Caldwell, seating himself beside the planter.

"Um! The tao can't work like the black ones," he answered. "They are like women when you get them in the sun."

"How many Negritos are there in the hills—those you don't ever employ?"

hills—those you don't ever employ?"
"A few hundred," Sancho told him
easily. "They are savage and stupid,
and we don't bother them. I don't let
my men go back there, either. If they
did"—here he shrugged his shoulders—

"they might complain of their work, and it might-"

"Start something," finished Heath pleasantly.

Little Baba returned with mats and glasses. His small face looked pinched and thin, and there were marks of raised flesh on the bare legs.

"Sing!" commanded Sancho imperiously.

"Master," begged the boy, "my throat

"Sing!" The fat, pudgy arm was lifted threateningly.

Obediently, the boy sat cross-legged on the earth, so as to emphasize his crooked back, and began a whining chant about a drunken mestizo who took a Negrito, and threw him in the river, and watched a shark eat him, and went home to tell his wife that he had seen the god of fishes work miracles, and that—

It was a vulgar sort of composition, popular throughout the islands. Caldwell had heard Leyte versions of it five years ago. The boy sang it mechanically, going through the grotesque gestures with a pitiful weariness, his tiny head drooping, his clawlike hands clutched appealingly as he ended each verse.

Sancho chuckled hoarsely. "Now dance!" he said roughly.

Caldwell started to object, but the boy, cowed by the other's voice, threw himself into contortions on the ground, keeping up a curious, guttural sound by way of accompaniment.

It was only when he was exhausted that the bundle of quivering limbs subsided and the guttural hum ceased. Sancho prodded him with a bolo scabbard. But Caldwell interfered.

"I don't care for any more," he said

So Sancho let the boy crawl away. A black shadow was watching the scene. Heath became aware of the shadow after Baba had sung his song, and he motioned Caldwell to look in the direction he pointed. It was Tota, the Negrito leader, who saw the torture. Tota, who knew that little Baba had worked all day in the rice fields, with

only a few mouthfuls to eat, and a pail of dirty, germ-infested water. well, looking at the black shadow, also knew that the arm wounds which throbbed and festered in Tota's arms brought no more pain than did the sight of Baba groveling in the earth before his master.

"Señors, you do not care for the entertainment?" The velvet tone made

both men ache to throttle him.

"Not when a boy is in such condition," slipped from Heath.

"Señores, he has the best of care; he

is lazy, he is-

"I understand," interrupted Caldwell cautiously, "that your wife is a musician. Would the señora favor us with a song?"

A change came over the fat face, and a dangerous, cruel look took the place of

amused contempt.

"The señora is not to be seen," he answered coldly.

"But she does sing?" Caldwell en-

joved the questioning.

Sancho looked at him carefully. He was in awe of this pair of bronzed men, who feared nothing, who lighted no candles to Santa Hemp, Santa Abaco, Santa Palay, who wore no charms, and carried no sacred relics in their chests of belongings; and Sancho knew that the Negritos might burn his plantation unless he made them think the government was in league with him. So he whistled sharply, and the black shadow that lurked behind the wall came and stood before him.

"Tell the señora to come out," or-

dered Sancho sullenly.

"Unlock her?" asked Tota in Spanish, with a malicious gurgle.

Heath started forward.

"She is-

"Bring her here," snarled Sancho, the faint lines in his face standing in bold relief because of rage. Turning to the officers, he said lightly: "Tota likes his joke-the little black devil!"

The men were silent. Presently the faint swish of a woman's skirts was heard, and Gemma, the Spanishnative beauty, stood reluctantly in the doorway. Looking at her for the first

time. Caldwell felt a thrill of genuine admiration—the same emotion one experiences at the sight of some famous painting of which they had only seen crude copies before. As he gazed into the deep, tragic eyes, fringed with heavy lashes, and saw the slender, well-molded head held proudly backward, he wondered why Heath had not shot Sancho long ago.

Gemma bowed slightly in recognition of the visitors, her eyes lingering in Heath's direction a trifle longer than was necessary. Then she turned to Sancho, and looked at him scornfully.

"You wished me?" she asked quietly. Crouching behind her skirts was Tota, who watched every graceful gesture of the woman's figure, every quiver of the white throat, every flicker of the Spanish eyes with a wild, hungry longing. And then Caldwell realized that it was Gemma who had roused the latent love of power in the dying Negrito race; it was Gemma who caused Tota to remember that nine hundred years ago in the virgin jungles his father had been su-

"Sing!" said Sancho, in the same tone he had commanded Tota. "Sing!"

Heath kept his eyes on the ground, shifting his feet uneasily to and fro. Caldwell watched her as she sang. watched her majestic, perfect beauty, and wondered how many pesos Sancho paid for her on their wedding day. Her voice, a vibrant contralto, naturally well placed, rippled out on the tropical night. It was an old Spanish love lyric that she sang, the low, passionate notes and the ardent words making the blood mount into Heath's cheeks, creeping up toward the boyish temples until he clutched them tightly with his hands.

As she finished she stepped back into the shadow, but Caldwell saw the unmistakable marks of a man's fingers on the rounded throat, and there was a red welt across the left cheek that betrayed the use of the same lash which punished arbitrary Negritos. Again Caldwell marveled that Heath had hesitated so

long before killing. Sancho grunted her dismissal, and asked his guests to have more rum. At

their refusal he sulked in injured silence, deaf to the tributes he heard them pay his wife. Only Tota, who watched her leave the doorway with a look of adoration, listened to the praises with a happy smile. And when the officers said good night and wandered back to the trail, it was Tota who followed them, ambling behind, glad to be with those who loved his idol.

"Better run back, Tota," Heath said to him, as the little chap stumbled over a bowlder. "Sancho's not drunk enough

not to want you."

"I come and talk with you," said Tota, with a new dignity. "There can

be business between us.'

"All right, bo," they told him lightly. "Come over when you have the time. Much obliged for the escort. Adios!"

As the humped figure disappeared,

the men turned to watch him.

"He's a queer duck," was Heath's verdict. "He's the leader of his race, you know-a poet in the bargain. Now, I believe he's proud of that, even if Sancho does treat him to a dozen lashes as an eye-opener."

"What does Gemma ever do beside sing?" asked Caldwell. "Is she ever made to work on the plantation?"

"Not that I know of-unless Sancho is ugly, and wants to humiliate her. Don't start me on the subject—it gets me raw."

Caldwell laid a restraining hand on

the boy's shoulder.

"Sometimes it is good to be raw," he said gently, "and I'm not satisfied to drop the subject. The condition here is bad, bad, do you know it? And it's the same lady Gemma that's brought it to light. Let me state the problem to you in cold English, and see if I'm right. Tota, the weakling chief of a dying, almost forgotten race, is the mistreated slave of Sancho, a typical Filipino planter of the rich class. Tota is madly in love with the planter's wife-don't start, there's a straight road ahead, you know, the turn is later. Tota is madly in love with Gemma, adores her in dog fashion. It is Gemma's love that made him awaken to his lost leadership; it is

Gemma's love that showed him his own people's wrongs. Therefore, Tota has decided to rebel, to gather the clans in the cordillero, and do as much mischief as possible. And I think they really could tear loose quite a bit. Here's only

the first part of the problem.

"Secondly, you love Gemma. It's useless to deny it. For the fundamental reason that you and Tota, unlike in all else save the masculine power of attraction, love this woman, you, too, have seen with clearer vision the wrongs of the Negrito, the tangle which the government must solve. Thirdly, Gemma loves you-I saw her eves to-night, Heath-and she is waiting for you to carry her off to the hills and make you a squaw man. Of Tota's love she is naturally unconscious. Then there is Sancho, cruel, corrupt to the core, but a ward of the United States, a wealthy ward. And here are you and I with only the common purpose of serving our country. We must prevent an uprising of the Negritos, we must prevent plantations being burned, churches looted, men, women, and children killed. We must not allow a pygmy warfare. We must not allow you to be spoiled. And it is Gemma who is the keystone of the problem."

They had reached the comandancia, and seated themselves outside. Heath's face was white as he listened, and his lips were in a straight line. As the older

man finished, he said briefly:

"You are right. I love Gemma. Not as I have loved other women-American or native-but in a higher, deeper way. We loved each other from the time I first heard her voice at night. I had come to call on Sancho about some fence work, and he ordered her out to greet me. She stood in the shadow, so that I could not see her face. When I left, she said 'Good night, Lieutenant Heath,' in broken English. And I loved her. Sounds like a moonstruck fool, but it's God's truth. You know some kinds of love can't classify. And just the tone of that low-pitched, earnest voice, pregnant with suffering and sacrifice, latent with the meaning of higher things—just that voice made me realize

that here was the woman I had always dreamed about."

"Go on," said Caldwell gently.

"There isn't much to tell," the boy admitted. "I learned, of course, of her miserable life, of Sancho's vileness, and all the rest of the rot. What could I do? One step to save her meant probably to have her subjected to worse cruelty. You know how men like Sancho butcher if they're jealous. Unless I took her to the hills and—and became a squaw man, there was nothing left. Some day, Caldwell, I'm afraid I will take the chance with—Gemma."

"No, you won't. You'll only think so. You know the squaw man's record too well. And breaking a man-made convention is more serious than we, who have helped make the convention, like to admit. There is something bigger than mere human opinion behind the laws of polite society, Heath; something intangible, mystic, unbreakable. cannot ride defiantly in the face of public opinion, and ride for long. You cannot say your own case is to be the exception, and then set out and make it so. Good Lord, boy, you know these things better than I do-you're fresh from the States, and that sort of thing. You're actually making me spout platitudes, when all that you and I need is a solemn promise that you will not make a fool of yourself over Gemma."

"I promise," came back softly, and their hands met in the darkness.

The hacienda on the side of the hill was wakened by the rosy light of a mischievous flame jet. The flame ran up the rows of shrubbery, dried and parched by the long drought; it coquetted with the miserable nipa huts; it frightened the sleeping Negrito slaves from their dreams of freedom and happy lives; it flirted with the squat dwelling house of Sancho, and then burst, with violent fury, into the bedroom of the planter. It covered his fat. brown face with suffocating smoke and cinders; it ran down the scanty covering and licked it eagerly. It wakened Gemma, sleeping restlessly on her banig mat, and drove her into the courtyard, rousing the natives to action.

Sancho, cursing horribly, blinded with smoke, beat the flame out with his fists as he stumbled along. He reached the doorway in time to see his half-brother Salvos shriek with agony, and writhe on the ground in convulsions of pain.

"Are Maria, Regina Coeli," he groaned. "Is there no help for this? It is the black devils. Gemma! Gemma!"

But she did not answer. She had reached the nipa huts, helping to rescue the tiny babies and the old people. Her long black braids were badly singed, and sparks lighted and died on her bare neck and arms.

At dawn Sancho looked with a sardonic smile on the burnt embers of his entire estate—not a peso of rice or property was saved. Only the stupid rows of Negritos, huddled together on the ground, met his look of rage; only his wife, faint and burnt, answered his cries of anger. And Tota was missing.

The surrounding planters gave their Negritos an extra portion of meal for that day, and laid aside the heavy whiplash. A coterie of them met to console Sancho, and to go with him to the comandancia, where he would demand the government's assistance. Caldwell, Heath, and Eddie Hoefler had been on the scene long before, entreating the army surgeon to hurry with more bandages.

Caldwell received the committee impatiently. He was anxious to locate Tota. If Tota knew that Sancho had come to the comandancia, Tota would surely take to the woods, and another burned hacienda would be the next message they would have from him. If he could locate Tota, he had a plan half formulated whereby—

"I will do anything in my power, Sancho," he told him. "I regret the fire with all my heart. Are you sure it did not start from an accidental cause, such as a cigarette butt dropping, or a——"

"It started from Tota," said Sancho vehemently. "The devil! He has fled—is that not proof enough? Guilty! And my fortune gone—the black devils are glad, but they dare not show it."

He ground his yellow teeth in rage. "As soon as we locate Tota," Cald-

well told him quietly, "we can see about justice. What would you propose for his punishment?"

"Slit his ears, and notch his nose, and burn him in oil like a torch—"

"Easy, Sancho! We are United States citizens."

Sancho turned on his heel, and left. The remaining planters followed mournfully, wondering whose hacienda would come under Tota's hand next.

Heath came in presently.

"Gemma's hands are blistered," he said eagerly, "but she's all right otherwise. How she worked, Caldwell; how she worked! The children clung to her. Was it Tota, Caldy? What are we go-

ing to do?"

We are going to make a new departure from anything which the government has ordered," answered Caldwell grimly. "Our friend Sancho wants Tota captured and burned at the stake. We know it was Tota who did the trick. But we must make Sancho think it has to be proven first. Tota's not far away. He'll sneak in here before long to see the effect-and Gemma. Then you and I must treat him, not like an arson fiend, but like the chief of the Negrito people. Undoubtedly he has the hills full of them, ready to make more mischief at his bidding. We represent the American government-understand? And he represents his own race. In other words-

"A peace conference," exclaimed Heath, "That's rich. A second Hague affair, with no Andy to pipe the dollars

into our pockets!"

"Listen," said Caldwell sharply. "Did you ever stop to think about war? Do it now. Look at the lives lost over every international argument. Is it right? Is it just? I'm an officer, you're an officer, we are talking treason when we refuse to call out enough troops to drown the Negritos in their own blood. All because of a scatterbrain theory. But still—"

"Go on," urged Heath. "Go on. It's

good."

"Why should we slaughter good men for the sake of the brown beasts on the haciendas? Why should we kill good savages for these same beasts? Why should we waste strength, and supplies, and God knows what else, to whip into oblivion the cowed, half-starved savages who know no better? Yet the government demands the protection of the Filipino—that means that you and I, as the officers of this post, must kill or subdue the Negrito. It means that Tota has aroused his race, that they have an abortive idea of conquering their masters. What's to be done?"

"I don't know," said Heath honestly.

"Caldy, I don't know."

"But I do. We are going to take Tota and argue with him-yes, argue with Did you ever stop to think wherein the white man is superior to the savage? What holds the savage to us? It's fear, Heath, plain, unvarnished fear. It is only cowards and fools who use knives and bullets at a time like this. Fools, I tell you. We are not fools. We are white men-and we are going to talk to Tota as white men can talk. Why, he's afraid of us; not because we ever mistreated him, but because we never show fear, because we call on no supernatural beings, listen to no superstitions, laugh at all women. What does that mean, boy? It means that you and I, with the rest of our race, stand side by side possessing our heritage, our white man's heritage!"

The muchacho had been knocking timidly at the door. At last Caldwell broke off, and told him to enter. But instead of the mild-mannered native, Tota, the Negrito chief, entered. He stood, naked, and striped with red and yellow paint, before them. His slanting eyes danced mockingly, and the humped back quivered with excitement.

"You know?" he asked, in Spanish.

Caldwell nodded.

"We know all," he answered. "Tota, you are a prisoner."

The black face changed expression. "You like Sancho—you help those thiefs?" he blurted forth, his lower lips drooping into childish disappointment.

"You burned the hacienda, you endangered the lives of your own people, you hurt Gemma!" The last drove the mocking look out of his slanted eyes.

"She is not-

"Badly burnt. She saved the babies, babies of your own race, and the blind pair, and old José. Proud of your work, Tota? Think you gain from it?"

The black head was thrown back in

defiance.

"I have come to you as chief of my people—you are the chief of the American people. We can fight togetheragainst the Filipino. See," he exclaimed passionately. "See the cuts, the wounds, the blows on my body. You lie if you say Sancho did not put them there. You know our story-what have we left? The bare hills where we fight with wild animals for our living. What future have we? None. My people are dying. They are sick, and weak, and timid. This is our land, our country—the brown men have no right. You have no right. It is ours-mine! If you will not help me I will declare war. We will burn more haciendas, we will burn your comandancia-your flag. You kill me now, and think it ends it; but others will take up the cause. I have dared to come here to see you. I am brave. Tell me I You couldam brave.

"Tota," said Heath suddenly, not looking at Caldwell, "you are brave. But I am braver. You speak the truth when you say we could imprison you and shoot you at sunrise, but it would not stop the warfare. Your handful of followers would wreak their petty vengeance until we killed them off, one by one, like the cholera kills the native. That is not the white man's way, Tota, that is not the brave man's way. Sit

down-we can talk this over."

Abashed, fascinated, the humpback sank into a steamer chair to listen. Caldwell remained standing, a look of pride in his face as he watched Heath's tall figure tower over the savage chief-

tain.

"Suppose," said Heath quietly, "that we fight this out between ourselves, without weapons. Let us prove which is the stronger man—you or I. You representing your people, their chosen leader; I, my people, their elected repre-

sentative. Let us leave the Filipino out of the question. We will go to the hills and try your fetish rite—have you forgotten it, Tota?—the endurance test, we would name it."

Heath smiled as he paused for his

nswer.

A gleam of interest came into Tota's black face. He did not think that Heath knew of Negrito customs.

"Yes," he grunted. "Yes?"

"I am willing to take the chance. Are you? Wait before you answer. Remember what this means. It means that you submit me to the tests of endurance to which your ancestors submitted their prisoners to see if the war god wished them set free. If I stand the test, then I submit you to my tests. It's a case of the best man wins-understand? And whichever conquers back there in the cordillero decides what is to follow. If you win, then it is war, and good blood must be shed over the killing off of your people. If I win, you must send your people back to the hills to remain in peace—you are the one disturbing element in the race, Tota-and the Negritoes on the haciendas must go back to their work, and forget your revolutionary poetry. I hold you to that compact, as if you were a white man. I trust you in the cordillero as though you were a guide."

"The heritage," breathed Caldwell.

"The boy's come into his own."

"Then I save my people from dying -you save yours?" The black face

looked thoughtful.

"That's it." exclaimed Heath. "You've got the idea—it's to save your people and my people that you and I try it out. It's the brown man who should be made to fight, but he's incapable, he couldn't see the big, underlying principle back of it. And the government is responsible for him-like children with guardians to pay the costs of mischief. Caldy, it's either the pure, unadulterated savage or the civilized, finely organized white man that can trust his own sense of honor. The deadly middle man, the convert, half awakened to higher things, with the sluggish, retarding pulse of stubborn

ignorance throbbing within—it's the deadly middle man who makes the mischief. Give me your hand, Tota. You

are a chief!"

It was agreed that Eddie Hoefler and Dobbs should know nothing of the affair—if, by chance, the result should be disastrous, it would be better that Manila get the particulars in a special dispatch, reading something like this:

Lieutenant Arthur M. Heath killed by Negrito in the cordillero. Lieutenant Heath, scouting, lost guides. Cable J. L. Heath, Hemstead, Vermont, U. S. A., at once. Shall body be shipped to Manila? CALDWELL.

But neither Caldwell nor Heath fancied that Manila would be notified. Also, they took care to snuggle Tota out of the barrio and the hacienda districts before Sancho or the other planters got wind of his arrival.

Preparatory to leaving, Heath said to

Caldwell:

"It's a funny sort of thing—all this. Isn't it, Caldy?"

"Funny, but not humorous," an-

swered Caldwell.

"Who would believe it, anyway, that I, Arthur Heath, being of sound mind and body, am to start into the cordillero to go through a bunch of fetish tests given me by a humpbacked savage. And a single thrust of the bolo, or word sent to a few kinsmen, would mean—"

"Steady!" broke in Caldwell. "Remember—fear! Don't waver, even to yourself. Spend your heritage wisely, spend it so that your children will have

their share untouched."

"Tota's word in the eyes of the entire island and of ninety-nine and ninetenths of the Americans would be worse than nothing. If he were a Filipino I should believe he wanted to carve me artistically, and then call in the clans to view the remains. But Tota's the unspoiled essence of love, hate, revenge, honor—and I'm safe."

"Of course you'll pass the tests. What

do they amount to?"

"Standing thirst, and lack of food and sun, and feats of jogging over volcanic craters—it reads like a storybook, but it's going to be damned uncomfortable."

An anxious look came into Caldwell's

face as the thought of what the boy was to attempt swept over him. Then the thought of the Negrito uprising, the ravaged little barrio, the corpses of the American soldiers that would be the consequence—all this convinced him that their way was best.

"I say," Heath asked him awkwardly, "you'd think it foolish, wouldn't you, now, if I saw Gemma before I left? Somehow, it seems as if I must say good-by. You know, she's different from all others, Caldy. She would understand. And if—if we didn't see each

other again-"

"Rubbish!" laughed Caldwell. "Why, you'll live to see her outlive Sancho, and become a buxom, dashing widow, and marry some meek mestizo. You'll remember then how you once—"

"Don't-don't, Caldy! I wasn't deluded when I spoke to you about her

love and mine.'

"And I didn't think you were; but this isn't the time for indulging one of your own impulses. You must not see Gemma-remember that. It might unman you, and you need every bit of courage and strength you are capable of. It is not going to be good-by between you and this woman. But even if it were, Heath, even if it were, you must not see her. Through the renunciation you have both gained infinitely more than through the momentary pleasure of a vulgar intrigue. You are going out to grapple with a Negrito chief, you, a white man, with a white man's heritage. Women cannot understand such missions."

So the boy left the comandancia with only Caldwell to grip his hand in understanding silence. He was to meet Tota on the ridge of the hills—they had arranged the place previously—and they were to press onward, under the black man's guidance. For three days the boy was to undergo the ancient, savage test of physical strength and courage. Should he show fear during that time, or fail to stand the feats, the black man was to send word to his waiting people that they might descend into the barrio and work havoc. But the singing knowledge of his heritage within, the

thought that he was to save the lives of the people below, made the boy trudge

onward, light-hearted.

Meantime Caldwell was busy pacifying the Filipino planters, who wailed for the punishment of the Negritos, and assuring Eddie Hoefler that Heath was out scouting with trusty guides. Not even the Negritos knew of the compact between white man and black. Instead, they went sullenly back to work, waiting for their chief to send word that war was declared. Their kinsmen gathered in the cordillero, waiting impatiently until Tota should give them the signal to attack.

With unwilling, enraged fingers, Sancho clumsily drove his half-starved band of blacks to rebuilding the hacienda, calling on the saints to witness the destruction unjustly sent him. Even Caldwell looked at the black embers of the nipa huts, and the shriveled grain stocks, and wondered if the blooming, prosperous plantation, with its rows of dwelling huts, could ever be reconstructed. And he thought of the white boy in the cordillero, submitting to the fetish endurance test.

The second day after Heath left, Gemma came to the comandancia to see the lieutenant. Her slender hands and arms were badly blistered, and she walked with a slightly tottering gesture. Gemma had scarcely rested since the fire, going among the women and children, soothing their fright, caring for

their injuries.

"Señora," said Caldwell reverently, as

he met her in the doorway.

"Lieutenant," she answered, with the vibrant note in her voice that made Heath and Tota love her, and Sancho fear her in an indescribable fashion, "where is your other lieutenant—Mr. Heath?"

"In the hills," Caldwell told her ten-

derly. "He is scouting."

"Then he is not with Tota?" she continued evenly. "I have had a great fear within me lest he go with Tota to make peace. I know Tota. I know Mr. Heath. I do not think it would go well with him."

"What do you mean?" Caldwell lost

his reverent manner. The boy had been

gone two days.

"I mean that Tota is a savage, and treacherous. I mean that he might harm your white man, and there would be no one near to ever learn the truth. Ever since the fire I have been uneasy about Tota. I have thought he would cause more mischief, although he is a weakling. Lieutenant Caldwell, tell me where you think Mr. Heath is. Tell me if you think harm may come to him."

"Señora," said Caldwell softly, "he is safe. And you must not worry. You must not think about Mr. Heath."

Her dark eyes met his appealingly. "Not think?" she faltered. "I, who love——"

"Who love him," finished the man.
"But you must not tell him so. Go back to the babies and children, señora, and forget the white man. He is safe."

Abruptly she turned and left him, her head thrown back in the same haughty pose that he had seen the night she sang for them at the hacienda. Two hours later, Sancho burst into Caldwell's room, yelling that his wife had been captured by the Negritos; while his back was turned they had stolen her, taken her to the hills, to be burned at the stake.

"Mother of God!" wailed the planter.
"We must have protection. We must have safety. The Americanos are cow-

ards---'

With a thumping fear inside, Caldwell stilled him, ordering out men to pace the ruins to see that peace was kept. Had Tota broken his word? Had he ordered his followers to steal the señora, and keep her for a ransom, or had the señora followed Tota and Heath, realizing with a woman's instinct that her lover was at the black man's mercy?

It seemed to Caldwell, as he waited for word from the cordillero, that the hours were veritable weeks. He wrote dispatches to Manila, to Leyte, to the near-by constabulary posts in Negros. He sealed them with grim thumps of the hands as he thought what he had written. Every dispatch contained a demand for men, supplies, ammunition, stating that the Negritos had revolted, and that the Filipino needed protection.

The piles of letters lay in a drawer of the old, notched desk, ready to be sent

at a moment's warning.

As he waited, Caldwell visualized himself being tried before the military court for "negligence and tardiness of duty, and conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman," and he felt guilty throbs as he thought of the homeless Negritos, of Gemma wandering in the hills, of the treacherous savages who waited for their leader's signal.

On the third day there was to be word from Heath before nightfall. That had been the agreement. Eddie Hoefler began to believe that Caldwell was too old a man to deal with nasty scraps in the bosque region, and the army surgeon wrote to the girl in Seattle that he was going to resign because of hereditary heart trouble. All day long Caldwell kept the men on guard, watching the Negritos like hawks. All day long he walked back and forth to the trail that led to the cordillero, peering up the blinding, dusty road to where the boy had met his adversary. Back again to the cool comandancia, to the notched desk where the dispatches to the posts lay waiting to be sent, letters containing the safety of the barrio and the final doom of the enemy. Still Caldwell waited. All because of a stubborn, crack-brained theory about a heritage, a white man's

At dusk, tired lines showed in his face, and he realized that he might have sent the boy to his own death, that he might have inspired him to seek out something which he was incapable of coping with, that he had influenced him to waste himself in proving the futility of one man's pet theory. And the boy was a splendid boy. Heath's tall, athletic person kept coming before Caldwell's vision; he seemed to be looking up at the alert, fearless blue eyes, the straight mouth, with its full, red lips curling upward at the ends, the strong, stern chin that defied the laughing eves, and the student's forehead. And he had been so carefully made into a valuable army man, he had been reared and educated to be an acquisition to any career he might enter.

heritage.

A new side of the situation came to Caldwell. Was it right to send such a boy to grapple with a savage? Granting the heritage, were the values of the two lives equal? Were the values of the two races equal? Was it sane to give a savage a chance to prove himself a man of honor? Was the savage responsible if he took advantage of the situation? What heritage had he? How could a man without a heritage be expected to

treat fairly one who-

Caldwell's brain fairly quivered with pain as the thoughts flashed across his consciousness. A sharp, tightened feeling at the back of his neck made him pace restlessly up and down. Wouldn't it have been better to have Heath reported to Manila for good conduct during the Negrito uprising than to have only himself know of the boy's courage? What could be offer as a reward? And the outcome either way was to be the same. Who was to be saved by the boy's sacrifice? The regulars and a handful of degenerate blacks! A contemptuous smile flitted across his face as he thought of them.

And still he sat in the early tropical

night, waiting.

Heath and Tota had met in the hills. clasping hands as men do before they enter a contest between each other. Neither spoke as they ended the trail, and entered the cordillero. Only Tota grunted approval as the boy walked the rim of the volcano crater, smiling as he did so. One by one the barbarous, almost childish feats of strength were accomplished, the black dwarf croaking his approval as he saw the white man, fearless, supreme.

The heat was blistering up in the hills, and there was to be no water that day, but Heath strode onward, the voice of the heritage speaking within, and the thought of the ravaged hacienda making him smile as he faced his enemy.

As he trudged doggedly on through the volcano region, always smiling, sometimes whistling a popular air, to Tota's amusement, he realized why he had been sent to college, why he had made the track team, taken hiking trips

through the Adirondacks, the wisdom of hearing older men tell war stories, the purpose in his rugged, thorough development. Not for the things in themselves-he had never known this before -not for the things taken separately. But for the collective, undefinable whole resulting from the development, from the football victories that set the campus ringing to the most frivolous pastime that he had indulged in as a senior. It was the result, the ensemble that made him able to walk unafraid, unashamed, poised into the cordillero bosque with an untutored savage who might betray him at the next turn of the trail. It was the training of his father. and his father's father, and so on back through a maze of ancestors, that had leaped into play, and permitted him to save his own people from petty warfare.

That night they slept on the desert rock, the stars blinking down in amusement, and as the boy closed his eyes, trying to shut out Gemma's face, he knew that the game was his. After all, if one shows no fear to the savage, no shrinking from death or battle, his resources for trying out valor and endurance are amusingly limited. Beyond his conception of death agony, the black man's mind contains no ingenious devices to torture another. It is either the white man who causes suffering through civilization's craftiness, or the semi-educated brown man whose groping mentality seizes upon strange hallucinations. With the lingering strain of savage virility, he submits his victim to their vagaries.

So much Heath learned as he tramped the second day according to Tota's bidding, watching with a sense of pity the gradually dawning look of defeat that shone in the twisted black face. Tota was realizing that his race could not cope with the God-given white creatures, that the end of the third day would mean the end of the Negritos, that his waiting people would receive word they must go back to the hills to die conquered.

The third day, dizzy from walking over tottering bowlders and skirting the snake nests hidden in the rotting tree stumps, Heath asked Tota when the test should end—if he was satisfied that white men have no fear, that the wail of hungry animals, the glint of the bolo, the burning of the sun, the parching thirst of the desert did not make white men cry out to gods and idols for protection.

With a quivering of the lips, the black man's head drooped in acquiescence.

"Then we can go back," said Heath forcibly. "We can go back—you to the hills, and I to the barrio."

"I am no longer chief," came from

unwilling lips.

Through the dried brush came the faint wail of a woman. Both men started at the sound. In another moment they had jumped over the wall of stone, and reached the tiny patch of coarse grass below. It was Gemma's arms that were reached up to them, and Gemma's tired eyes that smiled as they met Heath's. Gemma, who had trailed them through the hills, looking for her lover.

Impulsively Tota and Heath sprang down to take her in their arms. As one shining, black claw of the savage chief touched her blistered fingers, she drew back in repulsion. Heath held her safely to his breast.

She laid her head on his shoulder, the black hair touching his face, as she sobbed: "Beloved, I followed you. I was afraid, afraid of the black dwarf, afraid you might be harmed——"

She reached her full, red lips to his, waiting for his embrace. Heath, remembering Caldwell's message, drew back

"No, Gemma, no—no—I tell you, you must not."

"Fear!" shrieked the black man, jealous joy chasing the sullenness from his eyes. "Fear! Afraid of a woman's lips, afraid of a woman's body—afraid, afraid, afraid!"

He ran about the rock in wild circles, shouting in native tongue. Heath released Gemma, and made her stand away from him. At the eleventh hour he had betrayed himself, he had shown the one vulnerable point which no herit-

age, no training, no environment, no ancestry could change. Alike in aught else, black man and white men met on

equal ground.

But Tota began singing to himself in low, hard tones. He came near Gemma and Heath, then darted away, and once he lay on the earth, rocking himself to and fro with convulsive gestures.

Gemma sprang to Heath's side.

"Beloved, it is the death chant of his people. Once before I heard it-they make a poem-listen, he is speaking native now."

The grotesque figure advanced to the high cliff, and turned to the two below. In shrill, triumphant tones he sang:

"The woman I loved, the man I hated.

Being chief, I acted like my forefathers taught.

And harmed no man who came with me alone to do my will.

But the woman I have long loved, and the woman loves the white man.

She hates me—she turns from me—I am black, ugly, stunted. The white man is tall, beautiful, strong. But

he fears the woman.

He will not love the woman as I love her. But she cannot change her love.

My love cannot change. I cannot live to see her love the white man.

So I die, my race dies, the white man conquers, as we conquered once over forest beasts.

So the white man conquers and protects the brown man, the thief.

And Gemma hates me-so I die-but you were afraid, white man, you were

Maopoay takes me, makes me strong, straight, white-skinned, and I come back to love Gemma.

I come back-

The faint sound of slipping rock told the sleeping birds and monkeys that Tota, the Negrito chief, had thrown himself over the cliff into the ravine two hundred feet below.

Unmindful of Gemma's stumbling feet, Heath started down the trail.

"We must get the body!" he gasped. "My God, but the death whine haunts! We must get the body, and set it up in the comandancia-that'll stop it, that'll end it-better than the other way.'

"Beloved," whispered Gemma, "not below are you going? Not into the ra-

vine?"

Heath turned impatiently.

"Down there!" he answered. "Down there as fast as I can go. To get what is left of Tota-understand? I must get the body. Don't you see what it means?"

"But what is to become of me?" she demanded. "I, who left my husband to come to save you? I, who love you, who am unashamed to speak-

Heath paused, his eyes avoiding Gem-

ma's as he told her gently:

"You must go back to your people, to your husband, and stay there. You can never come with me. You must go back, I tell you. We can go back together. We can say you were captured by Tota-little Tota. Then we must never see each other any more. It is not right. It is not wise. Whatever love exists between us exists only to try out our better, stronger selves. You were created of a different race. And it is not meant for us to be together. It is not meant for us to break man-made conventions. Those who do lose the gifts that God gives us. Always, always! No, Gemma, you must go back to the barrio.'

His eyes drooped as he finished, and he turned away from the outstretched arms that bade him come. To clasp her one minute, to take her away with him, to forget man-made conventions, manmade society, platitudes—to live only in their rapt, impassioned love—— The thought of Parsifal flashed through his mind as he turned his back on the splendid, womanly, waiting figure, standing so alone, pleading for him to take her as

his own.

Then it was Gemma who broke silence.

"Go on," she said slowly. "I will help find—the body.

He turned back impulsively.

"Gemma-Gemma! I don't care for the world, for the white man's law! I love you, love you, love you! I want you! Forget what I said, forget-

"Go onward!" she answered sternly. "There are steep turns. I climbed up

this way alone."

Still Caldwell waited in the cool night,

sick at heart, feeling strangely old and feeble. Below, in the barrio, little Eddie Hoefler was running to and fro excitedly. Presently he reached the comandancia, laughing like a hysterical

schoolgirl.

"Oh, my God, Caldy, you don't know what they've done below. My God, Caldy, it's hell these black men can raise. It's hell, and we can't stop 'em. Listen." His teeth chattered so he could scarcely speak. "Sancho got on a rampage because of Gemma, and started—s-s-started torturing Baba to make him tell where she was hidden, and then—then, Caldy—I'm cold, g-get me some whisky—then, don't let Dobbs know—he'd die on our hands—let me hold your arm, it's warm and live—they took Sancho and crucified him!"

The boy lay in a limp heap on the comandancia floor. As Caldwell started to revive him, he became aware of a long line of people approaching the post. At the head were Heath and Gemma, Sancho's wife, bearing on a rude litter the remains of Tota. Behind thronged the tao, the planters, the awed, cowed Negritos, who knew their race was van-

quished.

When they took Sancho down from the rude cross he was paralyzed—a great, blinking baby, whose eyes wandered aimlessly over the crowd of faces. Gemma, watching them release her husband, shed no tears, but knelt beside him, patting him gently as a mother does her child.

"I shall rebuild the hacienda," she said distinctly, looking at Heath and Caldwell, "I shall make it as it was be-

fore. And Sancho will need care. He may live many—many years."

The blinking, roving eyes quivered as she stroked the crumpled brown cheek, and inarticulate murmurs came from the

heavy lips.

They left Tota's body in the public gaze for three days, during which time the Negritos fled to the hills, a handful remaining submissively on the plantations. Then they buried him in the river without rites, and sent word throughout the island that help was needed on the plantations, that the government would see that pay was good and the help treated kindly.

Meantime Manila sent Heath home on a furlough, and ordered Caldwell back to Leyte. Dobbs slunk off to Seattle, and Eddie Hoefler was left to greet

the new commanders.

As Caldwell said good-by to Heath, they looked at each other admiringly. Neither had touched at any length on the three days in the wilderness.

"It was the right thing to do," said Heath gently. "It paid. But we'd be thought fools, madmen, if Manila ever

got the truth.'

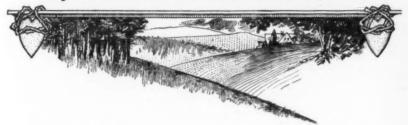
"And did we get the truth?" questioned Caldwell, a trifle bitterly. "Were we right? Was it the white man's heritage? I don't know what happened in the cordillero—don't think you have to tell me. Only Gemma followed you. And Tota loved her. When she found you, Tota must have seen her love. Then he threw himself over a cliff, and the warfare ended. Was it the heritage that turned the tide, boy? Or was it a woman?"



THE PAGEANT

JOY but a day ago ceased utterance,
And from the barren hall we went in gloom;
Yet, lo, in one brief night starts Hope to bloom,
Tiptoe upon the tomb of circumstance!
PHILIP BECKER GOETZ.

THE MOSAIC LAW By BURTON E. STEVENSON



CHAPTER I.



OF course, knew the symptoms as well as any one; better than most, indeed, since nervous diseases were my specialty. But the doctor is the

last man on earth to practice what he preaches; besides, I was very busy, and my work was of intense interest to me, and it was not until I fainted after a trying operation that I realized the time had come to stop. Even then I went to see Ferringham in the hope that I might be mistaken, but the way he looked at me when I sat down opposite him in his consulting room banished that hope, and his face grew grimmer and grimmer as I told my story.

"How long has it been since you noticed all this?" he asked, when I had finished.

"It began about six months ago." "And you kept on just the same?"

"I thought, perhaps, it would wear off. Besides-

"There isn't any 'besides,' " he broke in impatiently. "And you knew perfectly well it wouldn't wear off. It was suicide."

"I'm not dead yet," I protested, smiling at his fierceness, for I knew Ferringham.

"No; but you will be, or worse, inside of six months, if you don't quit.'

"You think it's true, then?"

"Of course it's true. Are you going to place yourself in my hands or not?"

"I suppose there's nothing else to do," I said reluctantly.

"No," he agreed. "There isn't."

And he thereupon proceeded to one of his exhaustive examinations, which make those of the ordinary practitioner seem the merest superficial tappings. When he had finished, I fancied his face was not quite so grim as it had been.

"It's not so bad as you thought," I ventured.

"It's bad enough," he retorted. "Where would you rather go?"

"I'd rather stay here."

"Don't talk nonsense. You can't stay here, and you know it."

"Well, then," I said resignedly, "I

don't care where I go."

He stopped for a moment's thought. I had always known that he was autocratic, and it had amused me. It didn't amuse me now.

"I know the place," said he at last. "I haven't been there for a good many years, but I know it hasn't changed. It never will. Wait a minute."

He turned to his desk telephone, and called up the offices of the Chesapeake

& Ohio.

"Isn't there a through train leaving every morning about nine o'clock?" he asked. "Nine-fifteen-I thought so. Thanks." And he hung up the receiver. "That's your train," he said. take it to-morrow morning.'

"To-morrow morning!" I gasped. "I can't go to-morrow morning, nor inside of a week. I've got a dozen cases to finish up first. I can't run away like that."

Then Ferringham did an astonishing

thing.

"I'll look after them for you, Dallas," he said, and swung around to his desk and got out a pad. "Tell me about them."

For a moment, I could scarcely believe my ears. Ferringham, the superb, the unmatched, the man whose every moment was precious, to take my cases!

"Well?" he said, and looked around

at me

"But-but-" I stammered.

He smiled tolerantly.

"Oh, I mean it," he said. "I'm a little slack just now," which I knew was a lie, "and I'm not going to have you kill yourself. I'm going to retire one of these days, and I've picked you to succeed me."

What could I say? I couldn't do anything but wring his hand, and cough, and dissemble; and then I sat down again and told him about the cases. For most of them a word was enough; a mere hint, and he understood. I knew I could leave them in his hands. Leave them in his hands! Why, heavens and earth, it was like guaranteeing their recovery!

"Where am I banished to?" I asked.

when that was finished.

"Ever been in the South? I thought not. Well, the South is just what you need—the leisurely, placid, unchanging South. At the same time, you want a bracing atmosphere."

"Rather a difficult combination in

July."

"No, it isn't. You get it in the Blue Ridge foothills. You will be at the station at nine o'clock, and will buy a ticket for a crossroads in Virginia called Meechum. You will reach there about seven o'clock in the evening, and will stay there all night. There's a little hotel, where they'll set you up a supper of brook trout that'll make your mouth water. The next morning, you will find a wagon waiting to drive you to Eagle Gap, about fifteen miles back in the hills."

"What is it—a summer resort?" I asked, alarmed.

"It's a sort of summer resort; but you never saw anything like it. Nobody goes there but a few of the F. F. V.'s. They, or their parents, or their grandparents, or their great-grandparents, have been going there religiously every summer for the past hundred years."

"I shall probably find it cool enough,"

I commented.

"No, you won't; you'll find them the friendliest people on earth, once you get to know them. I don't want to send you into exile or to a hermitage. You've got to have something to occupy your mind. Better fall in love," he added, smiling. "Only remember one thing—don't take those Virginia girls too seriously."

"How long must I stay?" I asked, like

the veriest layman.

"Till you can come back here and look me in the eye and tell me you're well. If I find you're not well when I look you over, I'll pick out another successor. And mind you, you're not to take an instrument or a medical paper along with you; you're to forget New York and your profession. Understand?"

"Yes," I said. "Hadn't I better wire

for a room?"

"No; I'll do that," he said, with a little smile. And I shook hands with him

and left.

But when I came to pack, that night, I disregarded his instructions in one particular. After all, one can never tell what will happen. So I stowed my instrument case away in the bottom of my trunk, where I would never see it unless I looked for it. I have wondered since what sort of sixth sense it was made me do that!

And that is how I happened to be sitting, one morning in late July, on the veranda of a big stone house in the Virginia foothills, with Betty Bramwell talking to me. Less than a week had elapsed since my arrival on the scene, but already I was acclimated. Yea, more than that—accepted as a friend and brother by the other sojourners at the gap, with one exception. Miss

Bramwell was not the exception. I had asked her to explain this.

"Philip Ferringham sent word you were a friend of his," she answered.

Let me say here, in parenthesis, that I shall not attempt to indicate Miss Bramwell's delicious pronunciation. To do so would be merely to travesty it. If you do not know how a Virginia girl talks, mere type can never tell you.

"Philip Ferringham sent word you were a friend of his," said Miss Bramwell, as though no further word was necessary.

I wrinkled my brow.

"He's one of the Ferringhams, of Charles City County," she added. "Don't be dense, please.

"You mean that your friends' friends

are your friends?'

"Certainly." And she looked at me in astonishment that I should ask so foolish

a question.

Then I understood Ferringham's smile when he said that he would wire. And I blessed him. For it is pleasant to be accepted as a friend and brother by a Virginia girl.

"It's a matter of honor," she added. "He wouldn't have sent you if you

weren't all right."

"I'm glad you think so," I said, and looked at her.

She returned my gaze with a candor which slightly chilled me.

"I'm not going to flirt with you," she said calmly, "if that's what you mean."
"I suppose it was," I admitted, feel-

ing considerably foolish. "I beg your

pardon."

"Everybody thinks they can flirt with me because I'm little. I suppose I do look frivolous, Do I look frivolous, Mr. Dallas?"

I glanced down into the blue eyes, and

then I glanced away.

"Really," I stammered, "you know-I -that's hardly a fair question."

"Now, there goes Kitty Ettrick," she continued, as a beautiful bay mare, surmounted by a no less beautiful girl, both evidently thoroughbred, swept around a corner of the house, and cantered toward us. "Nobody ever tries to flirt with her."

I watched her until she disappeared around a turn of the road.

"Oh," I said finally: "no-it would be like trying to flirt with the Venus De Milo.

"Because she's so beautiful?"

"It's not that-because she's so dignified and stand-offish. She's the only person here I haven't met. What does she think about when she sits in there in the evenings, and stares into the fire with her chin in her hand? Or is it just

Miss Bramwell's eyes brightened with

sudden interest.

"You've noticed it, too? No, it isn't a pose. And I rather fancy I know what she thinks about. You know she's "No," I said. "I didn't know it. How should I?"

"He's Judge Chester, of Chesterfield -a widower, middle-aged, a splendid

"So that's what she thinks about?" "Oh, no," said Miss Bramwell, looking at me with the utmost innocence. "I don't believe she wastes any time thinking about that!"

I began to suspect that this young lady was making game of me, and I returned her look with sternness. She dimpled.

"Aren't you glad you came to the gap, Mr. Dallas?" she asked.

"Well," I said judicially, "I'm certainly feeling better."

"Isn't there another reason?"

"Is there?"

"If you hadn't come, you wouldn't have met me! A Southern gentleman would have said that at once.

"See here," I said, conscious that my ears were red. "I thought you said you

didn't flirt!"

"Oh, that isn't flirting," she protested.

"That's merely paying a compliment."
"Perhaps," I said patiently, "you'd better explain to me exactly what flirting is."

She considered a moment, her finger

under her chin.

"It's one of those things," she said, at last, "which can't be explained. If you don't know-if there isn't something inside you that tells you-why, no other kind of telling will do any good.

see, circumstances change so.'

"Very well," I said. "I shall have to trust, then, to my obtuse Northern intelligence, since it's the best I have. But don't blame me if it leads me wrong. And now," I continued, "permit me to point out that you haven't told me yet what it is Miss Ettrick thinks about when she sits with her chin in her hand staring into the fire."

"Haven't I?"

"You said it wasn't about her in-

tended.'

"No," she agreed. "No girl would waste a second thought on him. about-

She stopped and glanced over her shoulder. I got up and looked around

the corner of the house.

"There's no one in sight," I assured her, coming back and sitting very close. "Now-quick-whisper it!"

She leaned over till her lips almost

touched my ear.

"Abbott Sutherlin!" she whispered. "Well," I said, glancing around at the landscape, "the universe appears to be going on about as usual."

But there was no answering smile on Instead, she really looked her lips.

frightened.

"I oughtn't to have said that, Mr. Dallas," she said. "I want you to forget it. My thoughtlessness leads me too far sometimes.

And she went away indoors, leaving

me staring blankly.

CHAPTER II.

If it hadn't been for the innocent distraction furnished by Miss Bramwell, I should have found Eagle Gap a pretty dull place. It had been famous in its day-famous for its high play, and deep drinking, and ardent love affairs; but the war had changed all that. When such of its old patrons as survived came creeping back to it, it was in a vastly different key. The elaborate toilets, the high play, the ever-flowing wine-all these had vanished.

There were two great three-storied

buildings, with broad verandas running along each story, and a number of detached cottages for the use of families. The grounds were very spacious, and crisscrossed by paths leading more or less circuitously to three medicinal springs, of varying properties, sur-mounted by pseudo-Grecian temples of white wood. To these, before each meal, the older habitués of the place regularly resorted. For the rest, there were the hills crowding down upon the little valley, three meals a day, negroes no end, the daily mail-and that was all.

So Betty Bramwell was in the nature of an oasis. Kitty Ettrick might also have been in the nature of an oasis for some; but for me-well, I could not fancy myself resting in that shade. I had discovered them during the first moment of the first evening at dinner, and as the meal progressed, I had the good fortune to catch Betty Bramwell's eye. But if Miss Ettrick was aware of my presence, she certainly gave no sign.

I had, after dinner, the pleasure of meeting my host, Colonel Pendleton, a portly gentleman with white hair, and white mustache, and pleasantly red face, who hastened to bid me welcome.

"I was over at the village when you arrived," he explained apologetically. "I hope that you are comfortable."

"Very comfortable," I assured him. "If there's anything you want and don't see, ask for it. We're just one informal family here, and you'll meet some nice people."

"There's one right now I'd like to

meet," I said.

He followed my eyes, and chuckled. "Of course," he said. "Come along. That's Betty Bramwell, as sweet a thing in petticoats as you'll find in all Virginia. One of the Charles City Bramwells-no better family in the State. Her mother was a Chatham-Chatham, of Westmoreland."

But by this time Miss Bramwell was aware of our approach, and Colonel Pendleton was forced to defer the remainder of the family history to another

occasion.

And so I met Miss Bramwell, but I did not meet Kitty Ettrick.

However, Miss Bramwell and I talked about her, as has been seen; and one afternoon when Miss Bramwell was for some reason invisible, I managed to get some further information from Colonel Pendleton, as we sat smoking a cigar together.

"Miss Bramwell tells me I've been made to feel at home down here because Philip Ferringham spoke a good word

for me," I said.

"We'd have made you feel at home, sir," retorted the colonel, "without any introduction; we always welcome the stranger within our gates. But of course a word from him did no harm."

"Do you know him?"

"Know him? Why, sir, he was born right over there about six miles. His mother was a Pembroke—one of the Henrico Pembrokes—no better family in the State. Phil's a clever fellow."

"He's more than that," said I. "He's the master of us all, in his own field." "Oh!" said the colonel, faintly sur-

prised. "Are you a doctor?"

"Ferringham wanted it kept a secret," I said, smiling. "He was afraid, if it was found out, somebody would want to consult me, and he's prescribed complete rest."

Colonel Pendleton nodded.

"You'll get the rest here," he said, "but I guess you've found that out. I think you're looking better than when you came."

"I'm certainly feeling better," I

agreed.

And just then there came a thud of hoofs up the road, and Kitty Ettrick cantered by, raising her crop in a mock salute to the colonel, but looking through, past, and around me in a way that made my cheeks tingle. And yet there was no denying it—she was a superb creature—and her mount was another.

"Have you been out riding yet?" the colonel asked, as our eyes followed her.
"No; but if I can get a horse like that

I would--'

"You can't," said the colonel, laughing. "That mare is her own—they were raised together. One of the Orion strain—and just like her mistress, blue-

blooded, proud as Lucifer, gentle, and

yet fiery as a panther."

"She is certainly a very handsome girl," I agreed, recognizing that this turn of the conversation was clearly providential.

"Don't lose your heart to her," said the colonel, glancing at me from under

his shaggy brows.

"Why not?" I asked, as innocently as

I could.

"It wouldn't be any use. Her family has arranged for her to marry Judge Chester, of Chesterfield."

"And she's going to?"

He hesitated a moment before he an-

swered

"Well, I don't know," he said at last, flicking off the ashes of his cigar. "I should say not, if she didn't want to. And yet I rather fancy she will. At any rate, there'll be the devil of a row if she don't."

I began to feel that I held the clew to the subject of Miss Ettrick's reveries, and also that I could make a pretty good guess at the rôle which Mr. Abbott

Sutherlin played in the drama.

"She'd be worth a row," I said, and again the colonel glanced at me. Then he glanced over his shoulder in a manner absurdly reminiscent of Betty Bram-well's.

"Yes, she would," he agreed. "But she's got a fool of a brother—one of those high-strung young fire eaters—and the man who takes her away from the judge will probably have to fight him."

He stopped, visibly turned the matter over in his mind, and decided to say no

more.

"Well," I said, taking the hint and rising, "I think I'll take a ride, just the same."

The colonel glanced at me again, and

smiled.

"I've warned you." he said, "but of course I knew I was just wasting my

breath."

I found it difficult, afterward, to explain to myself the sudden impatience which seized me to ride after Kitty Etrick. Perhaps it was the cool way in which she ignored me; perhaps I had

some wild idea of in some manner avenging myself; or perhaps there was, at the back of my mind, a half-formed suspicion of the purpose of the long ride

she took every afternoon.

At any rate, I sprang up the stairs to my room, hustled into my riding clothes, and hurried down to the stables. I picked out the best-looking horse obtainable there, stamped about while a lazy darky deliberately saddled him, and after what seemed an age, was off up the road along which Miss Ettrick had

disappeared.

It wound around the base of the hill which closed in Eagle Gap upon the south, and then ran on beside a little stream. I saw only one or two houses, but there were numerous little bridle paths running back into the hills presumably to others. At the end of half an hour I came to a village, lining either side of the road for perhaps a quarter of a mile, and then to a little graveyard, in the middle of which a soldier of bronze stood upon a granite pedestal. I got off my horse, tied him to the fence, and went in to look at the monument.

"To the Memory of the Confederate Dead of Stuart County," I read. Then I went back to the fence, leaned over it, looked up and down the road, and con-

sidered what I should do.

The road forked just beyond the graveyard, and I had no idea, of course, which of the forks Miss Ettrick had taken, even if she had come this far, and not turned up one of the bridle paths into the woods. Besides, I felt rather ashamed that I had followed her at all. So the debate ended by my mounting my horse and turning his head

back toward Eagle Gap.

Then it occurred to me that it would be foolish to return so soon, so I turned up the first bypath I came to, and permitted my horse to choose his own pace. It was a walk, for the road was rough, and evidently disused. Grass covered its ruts, and, as it ran on into a little cove in the hillside, it grew narrower and choked with underbrush. I soon had enough of it, and was just checking my horse, when he suddenly threw up his head and whinnied. An instant

later an answering whinny came from in

Curious to see who lived in such a neighborhood, I let my horse walk on. In a moment, he passed a turn in the road, and, as my eyes caught what lay beyond, I jerked him sharp up. For there, in the center of a little glade, were two horses. Kitty Ettrick was on one of them, and by her side, with his horse's bridle over his arm, stood a young fellow I had never seen before.

CHAPTER III.

Their startled faces held my eyes for an instant; then I wheeled sharp around, and returned the way I had come. Nothing surely could have been more unfortunate than the chance which had led me to that neglected glade. When I closed my eyes, I seemed to have its image still on my retina, and I became conscious of certain details which I had not, in that first instant, noticed.

One was that the man who stood beside Kitty Ettrick's horse was distinctly picturesque; dark, with curly black hair, clustering about brow and temples. I wondered how I had seen the hair, and then, closing my eyes again, I discovered that he held his hat in his hand. Then, across the glade, I saw an old house of stone, with vines wandering over it, and a general air of neglect and decay about it. By this time I had reached the main road, and, putting the scene resolutely behind me, I kicked my horse in the flank, and rode back to Eagle Gap.

It was with no very pleasurable sensations I saw Miss Ettrick enter the dining room that evening, and sit down opposite me. But if I had expected to detect in her face any reflection of the afternoon's encounter, I was disappointed, for her gaze was as impersonal as ever. Perhaps, I told myself, she had not recognized me in that brief instant during which I had stood revealed on the edge of the woods. After that, I resolutely kept my eyes away from Miss Ettrick, and, as soon as the meal was over, I sought the congenial company of Betty Bramwell. She welcomed me, I fancied, with extra cordiality.

"I know you're dying to smoke," she said, "so we'll go out on the veranda—to that quiet corner at the far end, where we won't disturb any one."

"And where no one will disturb us,"

I added.

"Precisely," Betty assented coolly,

and led the way.

We sat down on the broad bench running across the end of the porch, and she waited until I got my pipe to going nicely. Then she leaned back in the seat, and folded her hands in her lap.

"Now," she said, in a tone of comfortable certainty, "tell me all about it."

"Tell you about what?"

"About your adventure this after-

noon."

Of course, my start of surprise was just the confirmation she had hoped for, but I didn't think of that until too late.

"To which adventure do you refer?" I asked, with an irony I felt was weak and ineffective.

"Did you have more than one?"

"I haven't admitted that I had any."
"Oh, you don't need to admit it. I know it already. What were they doing, and how did you happen upon them?"

"What were who doing?" I queried

desperately.

"Kitty Ettrick and Abbott Sutherlin," she said, and this time it was I who glanced over my shoulder, and who felt a shiver of apprehension along my spine.

I gave up the contest. I was plainly

outmatched.

"Miss Bramwell," I said, "I would point out to you the danger of uttering those two names together. Now, if you will tell me just what you know, I may, perhaps, add some details to the narrative. Though how you know anything about—"

"What I know is this," answered Miss Bramwell. "You see Kitty Ettrick start on her afternoon ride; you get a horse, and scour after her."

"I did not scour," I objected feebly.
"Just before dusk," she went on, not heeding me, "you ride back again, looking as though you had seen a ghost; at dinner you stare at Miss Ettrick as a

murderer might stare at the judge while he adjusts the black cap before pronouncing sentence."

"I am flattered by your interest," I said, hoping to create a diversion. "You should join the Pinkertons."

"I am not in the habit of going around with my eyes shut," she said, smiling sweetly, "and I have a mind which instinctively puts two and two together."

"Just as you have this time."

"Yes. Was I correct?"

"I refuse to answer," I said, with dignity.

My companion clapped her hands,

with a little cry of delight.

"I knew it! Thank you so much for telling me, Mr. Dallas!"

I gave it up again. I felt like a man retreating before an overwhelming force, making a stand now and then to avoid being rushed, but always having to give way in the end.

"And now," she continued, "since we have exhausted that subject, let us choose another. Are you going to the dance at Greenbriar to-morrow night?"

"At Greenbriar?"

"Yes; twelve miles away over the hills back yonder. It's their annual event, and a great treat. Every one's going."

"Are you?"

"I certainly am."

"I was wondering," I went on, a little confusedly, as I looked down into her piquant face, "I—that is—may I take you?"

"How difficult that was to say! You

may."

"Thank you," I said. "Will you in-

struct me?

"We all have early dinner," she answered, "and start about six o'clock. It's a two-hour drive. And a full moon."

She glanced up at me mockingly. I told myself that it was absurd for my heart to quicken the way it did.

"And now," continued Miss Bramwell, "if you care to tell me anything more about your adventure this afternoon, I shall be glad to hear it. Otherwise I fear I shall have to go in." "I've never admitted the adventure," I pointed out, and would have discoursed of other things, but she arose and left me alone with my pipe.

At six o'clock the following evening I drove up in front of the hotel, and found Miss Bramwell awaiting me on

the veranda.

"You see, Mr. Dallas," she said, as I assisted her into the buggy, mounted beside her, and took up the reins, "I am very different to these other girls. They would have kept you waiting at least fifteen minutes; not because they had anything to do, but just to prove the supremacy of the sex."

"In your case, such proof is unneces-

sary," I assured her.

"Thank you. Aren't you glad I asked you to come?" she added, as we

turned out of the grounds.

"See here," I said, turning toward her, "you don't realize how dangerous this is for a fellow who has never had any practice at the game. I'm apt to get hurt."

"What game? What are you talking

about?"

"You know very well. You want to bring me down, just as you've brought a score. But they always got up and ran away uninjured, after a while, and I won't. I'll never run again. If you keep this up, I'm going to fall in love with you. If that's what you want, go ahead. But I warn you it won't be any summer-resort passion. And I won't be turned down."

I never saw another pair of eyes shine as brightly as those she turned up to me.

"I have heard this high tragic strain

before," she said.

"No doubt," I commented, somewhat bitterly.

"But I can prevent all that by giving you an antidote in advance. You see, I'm engaged."

"Engaged!" I echoed, and a little sickness came over me. "You—you

mean it?"

She was looking up at me curiously, but I was too occupied with my own emotions to notice hers.

"Certainly I mean it," she said. "And now there will be no danger."

"To be told that fire burns doesn't prevent one's getting burned if one puts one's finger in," I pointed out.

"No; but one can keep one's finger out. Really, Mr. Dallas, you are quite

Othello-like.

"Well," I said grimly, "I'm glad you're not engaged to me."

"Why?"

"I'd be tempted to use a pillow."

She threw back her head, and laughed.

"Oh, I dare say Dick is gazing into

somebody's eyes," she said.

"And you don't care?"

"How foolish it would be to care!"

"Then you don't love him!"
"But of course I do. He's a dear

"When is the wedding to be?"

"The wedding?"

"Isn't there to be a wedding?" I asked, hope beginning to revive.

She screwed up her face thought-

fully.

"Well, you see, we haven't got that far as yet," she said.

I confess I didn't know what to do. I was simply aching to slip an arm around her. I trembled at the thought of it.

"Well?" she said.

"I told you I didn't know how. Is it permitted to make love to another man's fiancée?"

"That depends on the fiancée."
"Suppose we take you as the fiancée?"

"Then it depends on the man."
"Suppose we take me for the man."

"Well, Mr. Dallas," she said, with an air of weariness, "it seems to me that you are continually trying to get me to make love to you. Do you know your Wordsworth?"

"Not very well," I confessed.

"There is a quatrain of his which admirably expresses the attitude of every Southern lady and gentleman toward affairs of the heart."

"Tell me what it is," I said.

She hesitated a moment, and I bent closer.

"'The good old rule," she murmured, in the merest breath:

"Sufficeth them, the simple plan, That they should take who have the power, And they should keep who can!

"But," she added, in another tone, and one which somehow warned me that the time had not yet come, "I don't see how a man can look at any other girl when Kitty Ettrick is around.'

I put my hand to my head. I felt as though I had received a sudden jolt. "Is she around?" I asked feebly.

"Metaphorically."

"I never was good at metaphors. As for Miss Ettrick, she's too grand, too remote. Too high and good for human nature's daily food."

"You don't know her," said Miss

Bramwell, with conviction.

"No," I admitted ruefully. "I don't." "And then she's changed. You see she's worrying."

"About the judge?"

"About her duty. I think she'll end

"With the gentleman with the curly

locks?"

She clapped her hands in sudden ex-

ultation. "So you did see him!" she cried. locks. Didn't you think him hand-some?" "Yes: the gentleman with the curly

"Very," I said dryly. "What's the

objection to him?"

There's a feud between the families.

"Capulet and Montague?"

"Ouite as bad."

"Well," I said, "I never knew a case -in a story, at least-where the children of the houses failed to fall in love."

"That's just it," she said. "He's not.

Not really.

"And she is?" She nodded.

"How do you know?"

"How does one know anything? One feels it."

"Oh, come," I said, "that's just your woman's imagination."

"Well, perhaps it is. I'd love him myself, if there was any use."

"You seem to have an exceedingly expansive heart," I said.

"It's large enough for all mankind," she retorted. "And there are the lights."

We had come to the edge of a steep hill, and, looking down into the valley below, I could see the glimmer of lights, and the sound of music and many voices drifted up to us. The road was very steep, and I was fully occupied in getting the horse down without accident, being grateful for the moon. I should have hated to tackle that descent on a dark night.

My companion sat without speaking

until we were down.

"That was just like a man," she said, as we drove into the grounds.

"What was?"

"Thinking he was helping the horse, when he was only hindering. That horse has been down that hill a hundred times, and knows where to plant his feet every step of the way.'

"I shall remember that," I said, with

meaning, "on the way back."

We were before the door, which stood flung wide open. I swung her out of the buggy, and gave the lines to the boy who stood waiting to receive them. Then, as we turned toward the door, a man passed just inside the brilliant circle of light.

Miss Bramwell gave a quick gasp,

and clutched my arm.

"He's there," she said. "Abbott Sutherlin. Mr. Dallas," she continued "Abbott earnestly, drawing me aside, "promise me one thing.'

"What is it?"

"That you'll never breathe a word of what I've told you.

"I promise," I said. "And let's forget it. The only thing I want you to remember is that the first dance is mine."

The smiles were back upon her lips again, and she nodded.

"All right," she said, and hurried away into the house.

CHAPTER IV.

Most of the others from Eagle Gap had preceded us, so that it was not altogether into a land of strangers that I descended ten minutes later. Greenbriar was Eagle Gap over again, only on a considerably larger scale. The long assembly room had been decorated with flowers, and vines, and colored streamers, and presented the gayest of gay sights. The orchestra, consisting of half a dozen negroes armed with fiddles, was already going, and, as I glanced around, I saw Miss Bramwell just descending the stair. I hastened to her.

"My dance, you know," I said, and was about to lead her away when I saw her face change, and the next moment a man was bowing over her hand—a man

with curly black hair.

"This is certainly a pleasure, Miss Bramwell," he was saying. "May I see your card?"

"Mr. Dallas, this is Mr. Sutherlin," she said, and I found myself mechani-

cally shaking hands with him.

I scarcely know what it was about Abbott Sutherlin which instantly arrested the attention. There was nothing extraordinary about his appearance. But little over the average height, only moderately well built, with hair that crinkled and waved about a broad, low forehead, a nose slightly hooked, and eyes-ah, that was it-the eyes. They were black, I think, though of their color I cannot be sure; but I have never seen any other eyes look at one as his did, as though the thing they were looking at was the only thing on earth in which their owner was interested. could guess what effect they would have on women by the effect they had on me-a little vertigo of excitement. And I am sure that this effect was due to no conscious effort.

"I am glad to meet you, sir," he said, and I became conscious of another of his charms, a deep and sensuous voice. I could guess how, in a woman's ears, its lightest word would be fraught with meaning. Verily nature had armed Abbott Sutherlin with extraordinary weapons with which to fight the battle

of the sexes.

I murmured some commonplace, and stood by while he ran over Miss Bramwell's dance card.

"Really, Mr. Dallas," he said, with an

amused glance at me. "I'm inclined to accuse you of gluttony."

"Why?" I asked, and then I saw that Miss Bramwell's face was crimson.

"Six dances seem a little too many," he answered.

"Six," and then my eyes caught Betty's. "I don't think so," I said. "Not half as many as I'd like."

"Well," he said, with mock resignation, "I suppose I must make the best of it." And he put his name down for

And then I led Betty away, with my

heart pounding in my bosom.

"That was sweet of you," I said, as we circled out together among the other dancers.

"What was sweet of me?" she demanded.

"To put me down for six dances."

"Oh," she retorted lightly, "that's an old trick. I always put some initials on my card that I can rub out when some particularly nice fellow comes up too late."

"Well," I said, refusing to be hurt, "you can rub out some other fellow's initials, but you can't rub out mine."

"Why can't I?"

"Because I won't stand it."

"Indeed!"

"No," I repeated, "I won't. Betty," and my arm tightened around her, "I didn't mean to say anything yet, but I can't stand it any longer. I don't care if I haven't known you but a few days I'm going to——"

"Oh, there's Lily Ebert," she broke in and brought me to a stop. "I haven't seen her for an age. Take me to her."

I led her across the room to Miss Ebert, and, without waiting for an introduction, left her and went out through one of the long windows which opened upon the veranda. I felt in my pocket for a cigar, but found with vexation that I had forgot to slip any into my pocket when I changed my clothes.

"Have one of mine," said a pleasant voice, and I turned to find Abbott Sutherlin standing there, a cigar between his teeth, and another outstretched in his hand. "I wanted a

smoke myself," he added, as I accepted it with thanks. "Shall we sit down?"

We drew our chairs together, and sat for a few minutes smoking silently, looking out over the moonlit grounds. I wondered if he knew that it was I who had broken in upon his tête-à-tête the afternoon before. Probably not, I decided.

"These Southern nights are something we don't have in New York," I said, at last. "They rather fire a man's

blood."

"Yes, they do," he assented. "I've often thought that the difference between North and South is more in the quality of the nights than anything else. Yours are tonic and bracing; ours are warm and sensuous. And we of the South are the creatures of our climate."

"Men and women alike," I agreed.

"But of course; men and women alike. I wonder which is the wiser, you of the North, who devote your lives to achievement, or we of the South, who devote ours to—love?"

"I don't know," I said, reflecting that this was the first time I had ever heard a man speak of love in that tone, and wondering at the little shock it gave me. After all, why shouldn't men talk

of love?

"I know a few Northerners," he went on, "who have come to settle here restless creatures who can't be happy unless they're busy changing things they call it improving them. We of the South don't want anything changed."

"And yet progress—"It isn't progress."

"Not always, perhaps. But, after all,

there are things to do.'

"Let some one else do them, then. Let some one else make the money and reap the honors. What will it matter to us fifty years hence? I tell you, Mr. Dallas, the wise man lives his life from day to day, and gets the most that he can out of it every day—the most for himself—without looking at the past or at the future. The most, that is, not in money, not in honor, but in happiness and content."

"Which brings us back again to the

question of progress, of making things better."

"Aren't you satisfied with things as

they are?"

"No," I answered soberly, "I am not. I happen to belong to a profession which sees too much of the suffering and misery there are in the world—how can I be satisfied?"

He dismissed it with a wave of his

hand.

"Are you miserable? Do you suffer? Then what does the rest amount to, so far as you are concerned? The only way it affects you is by making you miserable when you think about it. Be wise and don't think about it."

"Rather a selfish doctrine, isn't it?" I

asked, smiling.

"Supremely selfish. But, so far as I am concerned, this world was made for me. I enjoy it. Others must look out for themselves. Ah," he added, rising and throwing away his cigar, "I have been remiss."

As he spoke, Betty Bramwell sailed up on the arm of her current partner.

"Are you aware that this is your dance, Mr. Sutherlin?" she demanded, not looking at me. "Do you call this gallant?"

"No," he answered, smiling down into her eyes, "I don't. I apologize most abjectly. But I was interested in my conversation with Mr. Dallas." And he smiled at me as he led her away.

The boy with whom she had been dancing dropped into the chair beside me, and mopped his face with his hand-

kerchief.

"Isn't he superb?" he said. "He makes me feel like a Roman holiday—he the emperor, I the victim—and his thumb is always turned down."

"He is rather regal," I agreed, remembering the sentiments he had just

uttered.

"I'd certainly hate to make him angry," added the boy. "He'd be a regular tiger—one can see that. He shot a man once."

"Shot a man?"

"Oh, not to kill him. In a duel. The fellow had eavesdropped—something about a woman. Sutherlin had him out,

and shot his ear off. Said it was a fitting punishment. Something like Peeping Tom. But I must be going, or I'll have a girl rampaging around after

me."

I watched him as he plunged back into the house. Typical product of his environment-nothing but women. And Sutherlin? I thought I understood what Betty Bramwell meant when she said he wasn't really in love. He wasn't the kind to let himself go. Of love, as of life, he would ask more than he gave.

And then a figure in white appeared at the window, and advanced after an

instant's hesitation.

"Oh, so you are still here, Mr. Dallas?" asked Betty Bramwell's voice. "That must be a good cigar."

"It is. Sutherlin gave it to me.

Won't you sit down?'

"Thanks," she said, and dropped into e chair. "How kind of you to ask me. Will you spend the remainder of the evening here?'

"I'll have to go get some more cigars," I said.

You don't enjoy dancing, then?" "I don't enjoy being made a fool of. I'm going to follow Abbott Sutherlin's example.

"In what way?"

"Stop desiring what I can't have." She settled back in her chair with a perceptible wriggle of enjoyment.

"That's wise, of course," she said. "That's the way to be perfectly happy and contented, isn't it? What is it you can't have, Mr. Dallas?"

"You!" I answered bluntly.

"Do you desire it so very much?"

"Betty Bramwell," I said, turning upon her fiercely, "are you playing with

me, or do you really care?

"I haven't made up my mind yet." she said, looking up at me sideways from under half-closed lashes. "But I'll tell you one thing-I like you best when you're fierce.'

I rose with an exclamation of anger, and sprang down the steps. It was too

I strode along the path toward the inevitable spring house which I could see gleaming white ahead of me, and, hav-

ing reached it. I sat down in the shadow of one of its pillars. I found with disgust that my cigar had gone out, and I pitched it petulantly into the shrubbery. I would write Ferringham that Eagle Gap didn't agree with me. I knew perfectly well there was no use in my falling any deeper in love with Betty Bramwell. These people, with their insufferable pride of caste, would never consider me eligible. And besides, she was engaged. She had spoken of it jestingly enough, but the unpleasant fact remained.

My eve caught the glimmer of a dress coming down the path, and a moment later descried another form beside ita man evidently. They were coming straight for me, and instinctively shrank farther back into the shadow. But they did not enter the house. They passed along beside it. I could see that his arm was around her, and that her face was lifted to his. My heart gave a sickening throb of fear that it might be Betty Bramwell; but, as they came nearer, and the moonlight fell upon them more clearly, I saw that it was Kitty Ettrick and Abbott Sutherlin.

As soon as they were out of sight, I hastened back to the house. I needed

my ears!

CHAPTER V.

I fear I was rather preoccupied as we started on the drive back to Eagle Gap. This Romeo-and-Juliet business bothered me considerably, the more since I had met Sutherlin. I had noted how sedulously, even pointedly, he and Miss Ettrick avoided each other in the ballroom, and I wondered if they succeeded in throwing dust in every one's eyes but mine.

I was half inclined to relate my adventures to Miss Bramwell, but on second thought decided not to. She had not behaved well; she had flirted outrageously with every man in the room, as it seemed to me; and I had ended by avoiding her as pointedly as Sutherlin did Miss Ettrick.

"Well, Mr. Dallas," said Miss Bramwell, very sweetly, "when you have finished shaking your head and growling to yourself, perhaps you will tell me what it is all about."

"That is just what I had decided not

to do," I said.

"Oh, had you? I suppose you know that you have treated me in the most despicable manner to-night?"

"In what way?"

"Is it the part of a gentleman to claim six of a lady's dances, and then appear for just one of them?"

I might have retorted that I had claimed none, but I thought it wiser to

keep my mouth shut.

"Is it the part of a gentleman to flirt with every girl in the place, in the most open and shameless manner?"

"Flirt?" I gasped. "I?"

"Or, when you were not flirting, to sulk around the grounds by yourself, instead of attending to the lady you brought with you?"

"Oh, I dare say you were well enough attended to," I said bitterly. "There were at least six young fools around

you all the time.'

"Meaning that they were fools because they were around me?" she demanded, with a dangerous calm.

"Of course, you have read 'My Last

Duchess," I said.

"You mean I am like that?"

"Well, I don't know," I stammered, seeing that I was getting in over my head. "I just thought of it. You were certainly liberal with your smiles."

"Mr. Dallas," she said, "do you know you are becoming unbearable? Anything but a man who sulks! Since you seem to be fond of poetry, I might call your attention to some verses about a man who sulked."

I laughed—I couldn't help it.

"Will, when speaking well can't win her, Saying nothing do it?

"Precisely."

"If I thought speaking well would win her," I said, "I'd keep on speaking well forever. But what's the use?"

"Mr. Dallas," she said, "as I look back over our various conversations, it seems to me that they consist principally of efforts on your part to get me to make love to you. I have pointed this out once before. Now, I haven't the slightest intention to make love to you. I say nothing; I admit nothing. If you hope to get an assurance that I will say yes before you ask me, let me tell you you won't."

I considered it.

"I don't know but what you are right," I agreed. "But there's a certain difficulty in making love to a girl who's engaged to another fellow. It's a sort of trespass."

"Well," she said, "you needn't worry.

I'm not engaged any longer."

"What!" I cried, staring at her. "You mean-"

"I mean he was there, and I broke it off," she answered impatiently. didn't really care for him. How stupid men are!"

I stooped, and wound the lines carefully around the whip. Hadn't she assured me the horse knew the road? Then, as she shrank away from me with a little, frightened gasp, I reached out after her, and drew her to me.

"Now," I said hoarsely, "I've got you, and I'm not going to let you go. Do you love me, Betty?"

"Yes," she said, and hid her head upon my breast.

Then she looked up again, laughing. "There!" she cried. "Of course. you'd make me say it first."

"And you'll marry me?"

"Yes," she said, and hid her face

again.

"Now, Betty," I said, holding her closer, if such a thing were possible, and not quite certain whether I was in heaven or on earth, "this is for keeps, and will end in matrimony. Understand?"

She nodded mutely.

And then, with a sudden rapture of possession, I raised her face to mine, and kissed her.

"You wonderful creature!" I whispered. "I'll have to build an altar for you, and put you on it, and worship you. Do you know what a wonder you are, Betty Bramwell? I wish I could tell you! Betty," and I turned her face up to mine, "I love you with all my

heart. And I'm the happiest man on earth."

She snuggled to me with a little sigh

of content.

"That's better," she said. "I was afraid you didn't know how. Go on." "How long have you loved me,

Betty?"

"Oh, I don't know. Quite long enough. There comes some one up behind us. Let me go. This moon's as

light as day.'

I, too, had caught the clatter of hoofs, so I took the reins again, and spoke to Dobbin. But the rig behind had two horses, and rapidly gained on us, and I turned out to let it by. It was a crowd from the gap, and they hailed us with time-honored jests as they passedjests that made Betty furious because they were true. But I didn't care. This wasn't going to be a secret engagement. I would see to that. I wanted the rest of the world warned off. I had taken, and I was going to keep!

"That was Kitty Ettrick and her mother on the back seat," said Betty. "I wonder if they were alone together?"

"If they were alone together? "Oh, you know what I mean. What did you think of Abbott Sutherlin?"

"A most dangerous man," I answered promptly. "I don't want you to see much of him. He's a regular volcano."

"Yes," agreed Betty, closing her eyes rapturously. "Imagine him making love to one. My, but it would be exciting!"

"Betty," I said sternly, "I want you to understand that the only person who is to make love to you hereafter is myself. I'll do my best."

She laughed, and threw an arm

around me.

"But I wonder if they were alone together?"

"Yes, they were."

"How do you know?" "I saw them together out in the grounds."

"I knew it! I knew it as soon as I saw your face. Tell me about it."

"There isn't anything to tell. See here, Betty, we must keep out of this." "There's another complication, you

know," she went on, without heeding me. "I heard about it to-night. He's engaged, too.

'Engaged?" I echoed. "Sutherlin?" "Yes. Did you notice that tall, slim girl in blue?"

"No, I didn't. I didn't notice anybody

but you."

"Well, that's the girl-a regular wild cat, if looks go for anything. She's got green eyes-maybe that's why he likes her. And I think she suspects something. I saw her going up the stairs with the most fearful face. If she does

"I really believe you're enjoying it." "When there's a show I always like to be on the inside, don't you?"

"Not when the wild animals break

loose."

"Oh, then more than ever! It gives one such delightful thrills. But I'm not the one to open the cages."

"That's all right, then," I said, with a sigh of relief. "When is the wedding

to be?"

"Which wedding?"

"Why, ours, to be sure." "Oh," she said, pulling away from me, "it's too soon even to think of that." "I don't think so," I protested.

"I hope you're not a tyrant," she said, looking at me. "Have I been mistaken in you?"

"A tyrant! Nonsense! Suppose we

say next month."

She gave a little shriek of dismay. "Next month! Why, I'm going to the Kellers next month; and the month following I've got to spend with the Landons at Richmond; and then we're going to run up to New York for a month in the fall-I'll see you then, of course-and then back to Bramwell for the holidays. After that, I'll think about it."

"Look here, Betty Bramwell," I said, with decision, "if you think you're going to keep me dangling that way you're mistaken. I'll give you till to-morrow.'

"Oh, dear," she sighed, "I'm afraid

you are a tyrant!"

"Will you tell me to-morrow?" I demanded.

"Yes," she said, "I suppose I must.

What a fearful thing it is to be bossed by a man."

"Not when he loves you," I said, and I tried to suit the action to the word. But she pushed me away.

"There are the lights," she said, "and there are always folks about. Well, just one, then. There! Now, be good."

I helped her down at the porch, and delivered her over to her mother, who was waiting to receive us. Also to impart some information.

"The Messengers have come up from Bermuda Hundred," she said, "and, oh, yes, Kitty Ettrick's brother, Phil."

Betty cast me a terrified glance.
"Phil Ettrick!" she repeated. "Why, I didn't know he was expected. Good night, Mr. Dallas. I'll be ready for our ride at nine."

What a woman she was, I thought to myself, as I watched her up the stairs. Now, I would never have thought about a ride!

CHAPTER VI.

I met Philip Ettrick next day, and found him a slender young fellow, with a sort of concentrated gloom about him, which somehow gave me the idea that he was a poet. Doubtless I was entirely wrong in this, as I have never met a poet. He seemed to have traveled a good deal, and could talk entertainingly when he chose—which was seldom. He preferred to sit and think.

From Colonel Pendleton I managed to extract some further information about the Ettrick-Sutherlin feud. He imparted it with the greatest reluctance.

"You know, Mr. Dallas," he said, "we've rather got the name, down here, of being foolish about family quarrels, of cherishing them, and all that, to the third and fourth generation. We used to; it used to be the code that every injury must be repaid in kind, a sort of revised Law of Moses. If a member of your house killed a member of ours, then one of us must kill one of you; if one of your men ruined one of our women, then we must retaliate. Not a pleasant code—hardly a gentleman's code, even, as we understand the word nowadays; but customs change. They've

changed in this regard. We're forgetting our feuds, thank Heaven, and this ridiculous one of the Ettricks and the Sutherlins is about the last to survive."

"What started it?" I asked.

"A woman; or perhaps it was a man. Suppose we say a man and a woman—that's fairest to all concerned. It happened a long time ago, when the greatgrandfather of Kitty Ettrick ran away with Beatrice Sutherlin."

"Why should that start a feud?"

"Well, you see, Ettrick was married," said the colonel, stroking his mustache reflectively, "and Beatrice Sutherlin didn't know it. But when she found it out, she stuck to him—which was about the only thing she could do, I guess. They went abroad somewhere, and lived together until Ettrick's wife died. Then they got married, and came back to Virginia."

"Didn't that settle it?"

"Not exactly. You see, the only children they had were born before the marriage, and the Sutherlins have always considered the Ettricks—well, bar sinister, you know—and haven't hesitated to say so. That keeps the sore open. I've always fancied that's the reason that young fool of a Phil Ettrick goes around looking like Hamlet."

It was a good characterization, and I

couldn't help smiling at it.

But all this gossip was merely by the way; for the real interest of my life was to bring Betty Bramwell to terms. That young lady did not hesitate to break promises, violate flags of truce, disregard articles of peace, and otherwise conduct herself in flagrant defiance of the rules of honorable warfare. She explained to me on one occasion that guerrilla fighting was always permitted the weaker party, and that self-preservation was the first law of nature. But, I objected, the man who violated the rules of war got short shrift when he was cornered, whereas she insisted on being released, and starting all over again.

Especially did I object to her intimacy with Philip Ettrick. I knew nothing whatever against that young man, and could plainly see that he was far from being in love with Miss Bramwell. I more than suspected that her interest in him was due to her desire to be kept au courant of affairs—to be in at the death, so to speak. But just the same, I objected.

"But this thing mustn't happen," she said. "If Kitty Ettrick keeps on being

a fool, I'll speak to her."
"Keeps on being a fool?"

"She's just started away up the road, hasn't she? You haven't noticed that she's missed an afternoon yet, have you? Well, some day Philip Ettrick is going to stumble onto them, just as you did, unless I keep him occupied."

"But you can't keep him occupied forever," I objected. "Besides, I don't like

it."

"You know I don't care a pin for him, you silly boy. And I won't have to keep him occupied much longer. There's going to be an explosion before long."

"See here, Betty," I protested, "you're getting into this thing altogether too deep. I wish you'd keep out of it."

"Don't you want to see them happy?"
"I want to see you and me happy. I don't care anything about them. When are you going to marry me?"

"Next year, perhaps."
"Next year! Nonsense! Next

month!"

"I've already told you that my program is made out for the winter," she said calmly, "All my time is taken—there's no room for a wedding."

"And you really mean that?" I asked.

"I certainly do."

I bit my lip. Really, there was only one way to tame this young virago, and that was to go away for a while. But even that was dangerous. I wasn't sure of her yet—only half sure.

And just then the current of my thoughts was interrupted by a sharp exclamation from my companion.

"See there," she said, and I looked up to see Philip Ettrick swinging himself into the saddle in front of the house.

We ourselves were sitting on a bench near the entrance to the grounds—a bench well screened with shrubbery and as he came galloping toward us, Betty made as though to rise and intercept him. But I held her back.

"Sit still!" I commanded sternly.

She sank back into her seat, and watched the approaching rider with a fascinated gaze. Even I was startled by his face, it was so drawn and haggard.

He was spurring his horse savagely, and in a moment he had disappeared up the road his sister had taken half an

hour before.

And just as he turned the corner, a gust of wind caught his coat, and something white fluttered from his pocket.

"Get it!" commanded Betty instantly. I hesitated. I didn't like the errand. "Will you go, or must I?" demanded Betty sharply. "Don't you see we mustn't leave that lying out there for any passer-by to pick up?"

There was something to be said for that point of view, so I set off, reluctantly enough, and picked up the piece of paper from the road. It was, as I had feared, a letter. Why couldn't the man take better care of his correspondence? Should I burn it? I felt in my pocket for a match, and then the absurdity of doing that struck me. The thing to do was to return it to its owner. So I put it in my pocket, and went back to my companion.

"Well?" she said impatiently, as I sat

down again beside her.

"Well, what?" I inquired.

"What was it?"
"It was a letter."

"Did you read it?"

"My dear Betty," I said, "there are some things which gentlemen do not do. One of them is reading other people's letters."

"Give it to me, then," she said, and

held out her hand.

"It is also something which ladies do

not do," I pointed out.

"I do not need any lessons in deportment from you, Mr. Dallas," she retorted, her eyes blazing. "Too much depends on that letter to shillyshally over trifles. Give it to me."

"I will do no such thing," I said, and

buttoned up my coat.

"Do you really mean it?" she demanded.

"I certainly do," I said, with a firm-

ness I was proud of.

Her eyes blazed at me for a moment longer; then, to my intense relief, she threw back her head and laughed.

"Bravo!" she cried. "Sans peur et sans reproche! Shall we have a game

of tennis?'

"All right," I agreed, with alacrity, for though she was greatly my superior at the game, I delighted to see her slim figure flying over the court opposite

So we got our rackets, and proceeded to the court, where we had a very delightful set of singles, ending in

her defeating me six to one.

"My, but it is warm!" she said, sitting down on the grass, and fanning herself with her handkerchief. "Bring

me a drink, there's a dear."

I hastened away to the nearest spring house, and brought a glass of the cold water. She sipped it deliberately, looking at me the while over the top of it, and it seemed to me that there was a sort of devilish triumph in her eye. I wondered that her victory should have so elated her.

"Shall we have another set?" I sug-

gested.
"No," she said. "It's too warm. Besides, I've some letters to write.'

I watched her as she walked away, then picked up my coat, which I had thrown off at the beginning of the game, and started toward the house. Smitten by a sudden thought, I ran my hand into the inside pocket of the coat. The letter was not there.

Then I understood the fiendish in-

genuity of Betty Bramwell!

I confess I was honestly angry, and I stalked forthwith up the stairs to her room, and rapped loudly on the door. I didn't care if her mother was there: I was going to have that letter.

Betty herself opened the door, and I fancied she paled a little as she saw my

"What's the matter?" she asked.

"I came after that letter," I answered. "I-I was going to give it back to you," she said, and slipped her hand inside her waist. "Here it is." And she handed it to me.

I took it, and turned away without a

But she stopped me with a hand upon the arm.

"Don't look at me like that, dear," she said. "It was just as I thought. Do you know what that letter says? "No, and I don't want to," I an-

swered, and tried to free myself.

But she clung to me, and there was something in the feel of her hand on mine which I couldn't resist.

"It says: 'Your sister rides out every afternoon to meet Abbott Sutherlin. Be careful, or the Sutherlins will get their revenge!" "

In spite of myself, I could not but

heed.

"Is it signed?" I asked.

"No, but I know who wrote it."

"Who?"

"That tall girl with the green eyesshe's loosed the wild beasts for certain!"

CHAPTER VII.

I suppose that some of Betty Bramwell's excitement communicated itself to me. At any rate, I hadn't the nerve to return that letter to Philip Ettrick, because I knew it would be impossible for me to look him in the eyes when I did so. So I deliberately burned it.

I went to dinner with some eagerness, for I was anxious to see if the principals in the affair showed any sign of an encounter. But Phil Ettrick did not appear, and his sister seemed, as usual, sad and distrait, but not perceptibly excited or apprehensive. So I concluded that her brother had not succeeded in finding the rendezvous. wondered if a word of warning should not be whispered in her ear. Yet who could speak that word? Certainly not I, and when I mentioned the matter that evening to Betty Bramwell, to my surprise she refused to interfere.

"I thought you wanted me to keep

out of it," she said.
"I do," I answered. "But this after-

noon you seemed anxious to protect

her.'

"I'm not any more. She's made her bed—let her lie in it," retorted Betty. with a sudden fierceness which astonished me. "I'm not going to talk about it any more. We're going home to-morrow, mother and I."

"What!" I said. "To-morrow! You

don't mean it!"

"I certainly do. I'm getting tired of

Eagle Gap.'

"And of the people here, too, I sup-

"Of some of them," said Betty, and smiled.

"But, Betty, before you go-"

"No, I won't. But I'll tell you one thing. Mother is going to ask you to visit us before you return North."

Sure enough, later in the evening, she Of course I accepted. I don't snow how much she knew or suspected, out she was certainly very dear about it.

Yet, in spite of this crumb of comfort, it was very disconsolately that I went upstairs, and prepared for bed. For my good-by to Betty had been of the most formal. It was made before all the company, because she absolutely refused to be alone with me at any moment during the evening. And I had planned such an affecting farewell, in the spring house, with the oaks hanging over it, and the shrubbery all around.

Of course, I couldn't sleep. I could only lie there, and think about my misfortunes; and, along about eleven o'clock, I heard steps come softly down the corridor, and pause before my door. Then some one tapped gently.

I sprang out of bed, threw on my bath robe, and opened the door,

For an instant, in the dim corridor, I could not see who my visitor was; then, as the rays from the night lamp on the wall flashed upon his face, I saw that it was Philip Ettrick.

Without a word, he stepped past me into the room, and motioned me to close

the door.

"Don't strike a light," he said, in a queer, suppressed voice. "I have a favor to ask of you, Doctor Dallas."

"Sit down," I said, and myself sat down opposite him.

With only the dim moonlight in the room, I could see his face merely as a blur, but I remembered it as I had seen it when he galloped past that afternoon, and I could fancy what it looked like

"What is the favor?" I added.

"To bring your instruments and come with me, without asking any questions, he answered, in the same suppressed voice.

I felt a sensation of sudden sickness, but I shook it off. I fancied I knew what was needed, and what had oc-

"Very well," I said. "I will be dressed in a moment. Where shall I

meet vou?"

"At the entrance to the grounds," he answered, and rose nervously to his feet. "I beg that you will say no word to any one.

"Certainly not," I assured him. "I will be there almost at once." And I opened the door for him.

"Thank you," he said. "I was sure I could count on you." And he went

noiselessly down the hall.

I dressed myself as rapidly as possible, and, digging my surgical case from the bottom of my trunk, assured myself that it contained antiseptic gauze. a probe, a sponge, and the other necessaries for dressing a wound. minutes later I was hurrying through the deserted grounds toward the entrance. As I reached it, a figure detached itself from the shadow under the trees, and I saw that it was Ettrick.

"This way," he said, and led the way a few yards down the road, where a two-horse team attached to a three-

seated surrey was standing.

As I climbed into the front seat beside him, I was astonished to see that each of the rear seats held two men.

Ettrick must have heard my exclamation of astonishment, but he made no sign. Taking the reins, he spoke a low word to the horses, and we were off along the road to Greenbriar. And still I could not understand—only one thing, the encounter had not yet taken place.

Ettrick had perhaps conceived some wild notion of kidnaping Sutherlin and fighting it out with him.

I could not be a party to such a thing, and I started to protest, but Ettrick si-

lenced me sternly.

"You have promised to ask no questions, Doctor Dallas," he said.

"But I did not suspect—" I began, "No matter; it is useless to ask questions. They will not be answered."

"Then I shall get out here," I said

hotly.

At the words, I felt a strong pair of

arms encircle me from the rear.

"Another word," said Ettrick coldly, "and I will have you bound and gagged. We need you, and you are going with us. Make up your mind whether you will go free or bound."

After all, I reflected, it was foolish to engage in a struggle which could only end in defeat, and humiliating defeat at that, so I settled back in the seat, and the arms about me relaxed.

"Good!" said Ettrick. "That's sen-

sible."

I did not answer, but sat staring moodily along the moonlit road. Suddenly Ettrick pulled the horses up, listened for a moment, and then, springing out, drew them into the woods at the roadside. The men had sprung out when he did, but I sat in the surrey, determined to have no hand in the proceedings.

A moment after we were safe in the shadows, I caught the sound of hoofbeats from the road, and saw dimly another surrey speeding past us toward

Eagle Gap.

Ettrick, with the assistance of one of the men, led the horses on a little farther, then tied them, and paused at the

side of the surrey.

"Will you give me your word of honor, Doctor Dallas," he asked, "to sit quietly where you are until you are summoned?"

"Not to do so would result in my be-

ing tied up, I suppose?"
"It certainly would. I have your word of honor?"

"Ves."

"All right," he said, and led his four

companions away in the direction of the road, across which they dragged some logs.

This done, they posted themselves in the shadows, and waited. I could feel the blood drumming in my temples, for at last I began to have some dim fore-

boding of the truth.

Ten minutes passed—they seemed an hour!—and then again I caught the clatter of approaching hoofs. Nearer and nearer they came, and at last the surrey swung into view. Then the driver saw the logs, and pulled in his horses sharply. As he did so a man sprang to the bridle of each of them, and I saw the glint of revolvers in the moonlight.

"Get down, Abbott Sutherlin," said Philip Ettrick's voice. "I have you. Get

down."

There was an instant's silence; then there sprang out of the surrey not Sutherlin, but a woman's figure, and I knew that it was Kitty Ettrick.

"Philip," she said, "what folly is

this?"

"It is no folly." And he held her away from him. "Will you get down, Sutherlin," he added, "or must I drag you down?"

With a quick exclamation of anger, Sutherlin leaped out into the road.

"I warn you, Ettrick," he said hoarsely, "to leave us. You will regret this interference."

"Will I?" and Ettrick laughed harshly. "I think not. You were going to repay the old score, were you, Sutherlin?"

There was a low cry from Kitty Ettrick.

"We were going to be married," she

said, "to-morrow—at Meechum."
"Were you?" Ettrick's voice quivered with scorn and hatred. "Are you sure he is not already married, Kitty?"

"Married!" she cried. "Abbott!"
But her brother had turned away

from her.

"Will you come quietly, Sutherlin," he said, "or must my men bring you?"

"No need of that," said Sutherlin shortly.

"Come on, then."

Ettrick led the way back toward the

surrey, from which he took a long, black

"All right, Doctor Dallas," he added. "Bring your instruments and follow

us."

I picked up my case, in a kind of daze, and followed the little procession through the wood. There seemed to be a rude path, and at the end of five minutes we came out into a little clearing. I glanced around it with a faint sense of recognition; then, with a start, I saw it was the spot where I had blundered upon Kitty Ettrick and her lover.

"You'll have to take two of my men for seconds, Sutherlin," said Ettrick composedly. "They'll see that you get fair play. Or perhaps you'd rather have

Doctor Dallas.

"Your men will do," said Sutherlin

curtly.

"Then perhaps you will look after my sister, Doctor Dallas," said Ettrick.

"until we have need of you."

Obediently enough, I went to where Kitty Ettrick, a little apart, stood supporting herself against a tree. She was staring straight before her, and took no heed of me.

"It is to be pistols at ten paces," continued Ettrick evenly. "I have the pistols here." He opened the case he had been carrying under his arm. "Will

you select your weapon?"

"I warn you, Ettrick," said Sutherlin, in a voice carefully suppressed, "that I am a dead shot. And this is

wholly irregular."

"It is the best I could do," said Ettrick. "And as for your being a dead shot, your hand will tremble to-night. You are a coward at heart."

Without a word, Sutherlin strode forward, and snatched one of the pistols from the case. Ettrick took the other, and placed the box on the ground.

"Here is powder and ball," he added. "Each man will load for himself."

There was a moment's silence. I saw the bullets rammed home; then, at a sign from Ettrick, one of the men paced off the distance, and set a little twig with a handkerchief floating from it, at each station. They were terribly near.

The men took their places.

"Whatever the result," said Ettrick, "this is to be an accident. These men are from my place, and thoroughly to be trusted. Johnson will count three, and at the last word we will fire. You understand?"

"Perfectly," Sutherlin answered, and I could feel the rage which flamed in his

Johnson came forward, and took his stand.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

"Yes," answered the two men simultaneously, and raised their weapons.

Johnson paused an instant, and I could feel the cold sweat break out across my forehead. It seemed to me that I was suffocating. I glanced at my companion. She was still staring straight ahead, with eyes intent, but unseeing.

"Ready." said Johnson's voice. "One,

two, three!"

The pistols spoke at the same instant, so close together that there was but one report. For a breath, both men held their places, staring intently at each other; then Ettrick dropped his pistol, clutched at his breast, raised himself on tiptoe, half turned, and fell.

CHAPTER VIII.

That sight struck away the chains which had held me spellbound, and in an instant I was beside the fallen man. turned him over on his back, and stripped away his shirt. There was an ugly hole just over his heart, from which the blood was flowing slowly. I felt his pulse; I looked into his eyes, which were open and staring fixedly up at the heavens.

"Well?" asked Johnson's voice.

"He is dead!" I answered hoarsely. For an instant there was silence; then I felt some one behind me, and before I could interfere Kitty Ettrick had snatched up the pistol which her brother had dropped, and started toward Sutherlin. He stood calmly awaiting her, a smile upon his lips. Before I understood her purpose, she raised the pistol, pointed it straight into his face, and pulled the trigger.

Of course I knew that the weapon had already been discharged, but I shall never forget the sickening bound of the heart with which I witnessed that action. Sutherlin, too, must have known he was in no danger, and yet I could not but admit the courage with which he stood there, quite at ease, as that distraught woman advanced upon him.

It was over in a breath, for, as Kitty Ettrick pulled the trigger, she dropped

senseless at his feet.

"Take her away," said Sutherlin, as I stooped to raise her. "Take her back to the Gap. There is no further need of me here?" he added.

"No," I said. "The sooner you get away the better."

"I think so myself," he agreed coolly, and tossed his pistol toward the empty box.

Then, without a glance at the man he had killed, or the woman he had meant to ruin, he strode away toward the road.

A moment later I heard him driving away toward Greenbriar.

Six months later, after a month with the Bramwells, I was back in New York, quite well and very happy, for Betty and I had managed to reach a mutually satisfactory understanding.

One night Ferringham came around to smoke a pipe with me, and just as it was getting time for him to go, turned

to me abruptly.

"I've heard some strange rumors about what happened down there at the Gap, Dallas," he said. "What was the truth of it?"

So I told him the story, while he sat, and smoked, and nodded.

"What happened afterward?" he

"Ettrick was supposed to have shot himself while hunting," I said. "Of course, everybody understood. But his sister's name did not appear."

"What happened to her?"

"I've got a letter here." I said. "Came in to-day, from Betty Bramwell."

"I haven't congratulated you yet," said Ferringham, and held out his hand. "I've never met her, but I know her mother. If she's anything like her-"

"Wait till you see her," I said, and

opened the letter.

"DEAR TOM: Do you know this is the last letter I shall ever write you as Betty Bramwell-for in three days more-I can scarcely believe it, Tom, and I'm rather fright-

"Hum!" I said, and skipped.

"Kitty Ettrick is to marry Judge Chester next month, and no doubt they will both be miserable ever after. Abbott Sutherlin has settled down on his place with his green-eyed wife—it seems they were married all the time! How history repeats itself! The feud is evidently to be passed on to the next generation, and I suppose to the generation after that. It makes me feel as though I were liv-ing in the Middle Ages!

"Kitty's mother is quite broken. I think she knows the whole story-no doubt Kitty told her. Kitty is more reserved than ever. This last occurrence seems to have quite frozen her. And her hair is turning gray

"You're to reach here on the Wednesday afternoon train, remember, and there's to be a little dinner that night."

"Hum!" I said again, and looked up. Ferringham was smiling at me kindly.

"Well, I'll be getting along," he said. "You haven't felt any return of that nervousness?

"Not a sign."

"I'll give Mrs. Dallas a hint to look after you, as soon as I meet her. Good night, Dallas, and the best of luck. You leave in the morning?"

"Yes-the nine-fifteen."

"Same train you took before?"

"Yes."

"I guess you're more willing to go this time?"

"Yes," I said simply, "I am."





THE LONG GRAY ROAD Louise Rice and Henri Robers



GRAY man, gray from hat to shoes; gray weather, and the wind blowing clouds across a watery moon; the houses, the chapel, the road, all the whiter

because the night is trying to be so black. The old women, wrapped in shawls, who come shuffling out of the chapel hurry away to escape the penetrating wind, and the gray, smothering

night.

The gray man, seeming to be driven along by the ghostly, flying moon and the forsaken wind, rising from the low, departing sun, plodded on, his little dog trotting on before him. Three miles down that lonely road was his hut, the little, crude bungalow which stood starkly near the sea. Three miles, but they, seemed twenty, separating him from the cot where he might throw himself and drink It; for he had quarts and quarts of It about him, enough to last at least ten days.

Cout-cout, the terrier, heading for food and cover, cared nothing for these three miles. Had he not been a polite soul, he could have been home in a few minutes, but devotion and good instincts kept him within sight of his master, even though he was consumed with curiosity to see what that cat had been

up to while he was away.

Not that he hated all cats, as some unreasonable dogs do. No, sir, he never hated a cat unless she was of an especially nasty temper, and Kitty-cat had a very mild disposition. Everything that lived in the bungalow had to have

a mild disposition, for there were days—Cout-cout stopped and gave a miserable little whine as he thought of them—when the master went away, leaving in his place one who looked somewhat like him, but whose words were blows and whose fingers were pincers of cold steel. That was the time when one had to have good manners and all the virtues, for there was no food and often no fire, and the stranger filled all the peaceful house with dismal sobs and dreadful laughter.

Cout-cout gave an impatient bark, and looked back for the tender, whimsical smile in the dark eyes. The stranger had not arrived yet, anyway.

The eyes were somber again as the little thing scampered off, his dog heart gladdened by the sun of a smile which meant God and heaven to him; somber eyes, brooding over a mouth too sensitive, a nose too fine and pinched, a jaw astoundingly sensuous and powerful.

He had lived alone too long—this gray man, who should have known the feel of little fingers in his nervous grasp. As it was, he had had Cout-cout, and Kitty-cat, and Chick-a-chick. Chick-a-chick was important. He had been a downy, frightened baby chicken in a grocer's window at Easter, and the grocer had charged six prices for him, because his customer wished to buy him for sentiment. Sentiment is expensive. It is even expensive to feel sorry for a baby chick being chased about a gay show window by grimy hands. Chick-a-chick had traveled the four miles be-

tween village and hut snug and warm in the breast pocket of his savior, and had been devoted ever after. Why not?

He was not human.

The relatives who occasionally came to see the gray man had no sentiment for him save that of curiosity. They glanced down at the way he lived, and agreed that it was interesting—the house which was not furnished, the chicken who strolled about with the cat and dog—his way of living, talking, thinking. But, all things considered—especially It—they thought it was best that he lived here, away, quite far away; and he was glad that they thought so.

You see, he did not play bridge or even euchre, and he never had been known to sit through a whole play, and he had queer ideas; despite the fact of —It—he laughed when they implored

him to "reform."

Besides, he had the audacity to say, at all times and in all places, just what he really thought. Really, it was better that he should live in the woods—near the ocean, where the air is always so

good!

Other people whispered behind their most respectable hands that he was a bad man, but they asked him to dine quite frequently; it is pleasantly spicy to entertain the devil, especially when his manner is of a quality quite unattainable by any of the good people who meet him, and enliven their feeble conversation with him afterward.

He had redeeming qualities, though. Ask the grocer and the butcher, who often sent a package which he had paid for to some starving man or woman, and who never had to send him a bill, for when he had no money, he did not

eat. Ask Cout-cout.

Suddenly he stopped his long, tramper's stride, and cried aloud: "Why, it is to-morrow—to-morrow!" and stood still, unconscious of the whirling winds.

Cout-cout came scampering back, all curiosity, and to him the next remark was addressed: "You little rascal, to-morrow will be my birthday."

Cout-cout barked, and then made an excited little run at the beloved legs. He

understood perfectly. The gray man stood still, overwhelmed with memories, but distracted from them by a vague consciousness of a streak of golden color, somewhere before him—yellow, in long, shining bands, which waved and shimmered. That was usually the first symptom of—

With numb fingers he painfully drew the cork from a bottle of It, and drank. The time of reckoning was near, but it might be deferred a little by more of the same; surely it need not come, not till after to-morrow. To-morrow—the

yellow again with that word!

His hand was halfway to his pocket, but there it stopped. Vaguely a face smiled out at him from the gray clouds, a face softly framed in yellow hair, young, tender, wistful, and he knew that it was the thought of his girl mother, lost almost before he knew her, that had

so painted her.

In the sudden reaction, he laughed aloud, with a boy's intonation; the reckoning was not yet. For a little while longer he need not dread the madness It brought upon him, in ever-narrowing cycles. And to-morrow was his birthday. He could hardly say that he loved the day, but his only happinesses had been the few birthdays of his childhood, when he had had his passionately loved, passionately loving mother, so there was a tenderness toward it always, a disposition to make of it a fête.

He felt in his pocket, and brought out a little roll of bills. Were they all ones? Would there be enough? A pine splinter, lit from his pipe, helped him to count. There were five dollars in all. Enough—yes, plenty. With light feet he turned again toward the town, while Cout-cout barked in joyous circles around him, instantly responsive to the little whistle which told him of his mas-

ter's good humor.

Together they bought chops—a lot of them—and anchovies, and olives, and crackers; some sardines for Kitty-cat—she liked the expensive brands best—and a particular sort of breakfast food for Chick-a-chick, and some beef bones for Cout-cout's little white teeth. And how could be forget nuts for the squir-

rels and hempseed for the bird's shelf

on the porch?

Then, much burdened with bundles, they turned toward the sea, man and dog aglow with the anticipation of happiness, mutually conscious of the other's mood. Just before they turned the corner to the home road, they both stopped. Cout-cout knew that corner and the three shining balls over it very well. Sometimes they exchanged useless articles there for a much-needed chop, and sometimes the master only looked in the window, sighing and laughing at what he saw there, and once he had bought a little collar for Coutcout, who bore its pressure upon his neck patiently, but was glad when the master took it off and gave it to Kittycat to play with.

"My, my!" said the tender, drawling voice to Cout-cout. "Wish I could buy that ring for myself. It's genuine Spanish—twisted silver—and it's been a long time since any one gave me a

present. I wonder-"

They went into the pawnshop, and the man laid down his bundles, sought and found his shabby purse, and

counted out its contents.

"Is that enough for the silver ring in the window?" he asked, laying a bill and some change upon the counter. No matter how low, how gray his voice might be, it was always alive, vital, like himself.

"I want three dollars for that ring, and it's worth more," said the pawnbroker, reaching into the window for it. "It's a bargain. Want to take it

for-oh-say two-fifty?"

Cout-cout turned and trotted to the door. He knew just as well as the master that the one-thirty lying on the counter was all they had—all they would have for a good many days, and the man also turned, gathering his packages.

"No, not to-day," he said. Then he hesitated, and laid down the things again. "Would you—take my overcoat?" he asked, beginning to loosen it.

The pawnbroker shook his head. "We don't take clothes." And he looked curiously at the man who would

exchange his coat for an article of jew-

The gray man buttoned his coat and passed out. "Too bad, Cout-cout!" he said regretfully. "Too bad!"

"Too bad, Cout-cout," echoed a voice at his elbow. "How much do you think your master needs?"

He turned—his head up. For the moment he seemed to grow taller and darker. The woman seemed a little

breathless.

"I was in there," she said, motioning with her head. "I left my watch. I needed only twenty dollars, and he gave me five more. You may have it, if you wish."

The man shook his head.

"You want that very much, don't you?" she insisted. "It is for some one you love, isn't it?"

"No—yes—that is—I mean, it was for myself, but it was because to-morrow was my birthday, and I wanted to pretend—that some one——"

The gesture with which she swiftly took his hand, pressed it, and as swiftly dropped it said so much that it left him dumb, with a strangling in his throat.

"Then why not borrow from me?" she inquired. "You can pay me back, and I do not need it just now."

He looked at her attentively. She was fine and trim in self and garb, not beautiful, save as youth, and health, and keen intelligence always are; a little worn, a little saddened, but brave and proud. His smile was always a revelation; now it touched the gray, sallow face to radiance, and the woman smiled back.

"You will take it?"
"On one condition."

"What is that?"

"That you will come out and help us eat my birthday supper."

"Where do you live?"

"Four miles out on the Long Road, in a shanty that I built for myself—and Cout-cout, and Kitty-cat, and Chick-a-chick."

She looked at him wonderingly.

"You ask me to go out there, alone with you, for your birthnight supper,

when you are an absolute stranger to me?"

"You offered to trust your money to me, when I was an absolute stranger, and most people——" He softly beat one worn glove against his palm and looked deep into her eyes.

"Tell me, are you afraid—to go there"—a long pause—"with me?"

"No."

"Then why not come?"

Something passed between them in the long moment before she answered; a give-and-take of quick glances, fraught with more meaning than words could have carried. Cout-cout, dancing about on all four legs to keep himself warm, felt rather resentful, for he was not used to being unnoticed.

Then she said:

"Thank you, I will go, with pleasure. It is lonely for me here. Here is the bone of contention." And she laid the bill in his hand.

They went back and bought the ring, and some more chops, and a bottle of good Chianti from the tiny Italian grocery, and in the light of a young moon turned toward the sea.

"I knew you would not mind walking," he said presently, "so I did not think it worth while to ask you, or to

apologize."

"Of course I'd rather walk. Besides, I've never been down this road before. People seemed to think that it was hardly safe. They told me a man lived somewhere on it who was always either mad or intoxicated, and so—— Is there such a man, or is that one of the village bogies?"

He had stopped as she put the question, and she turned toward him in wonder. One glance answered her. A pulse beat in his cheek so strongly that

she could count its throbs.

"Yes, there is such a man. He stands

before you."

No explanations, no shame; only a slow, tormented smile on the lips, and passionate pleading in the eyes.

"Shall we walk on?" she said pleasantly. "It's cold standing still, and see how impatient Cout-cout is."

He looked at her.

"You don't understand. It is just as they say. Only, I am not—so—to-night, or else I would not have asked——"

"No, of course not, but—it wouldn't make any difference. I'm quite used to that. My only brother had trouble of that sort. We were separated for years. He was my half brother, and his mother was very strict, very—respectable." In spite of his swelling heart, the man laughed, for her tone was illuminative. "Yes, and I always hated her, and she nearly drove him to destruction. I just didn't come down the road because I live with some dear old ladies, and they think me queer enough as it is, painting for a living, and tramping about the world without a background of relatives and society."

"It's only because I'm so much

alone," he said hoarsely.

She nodded, and rapped out her customary little "Of course," that he was beginning to feel so characteristic of her, with so much understanding that he stared.

"Most people think a-a drunkard-

is worse than a thief."

It cost him an effort to say the ugly word, but he would not spare himself.

"Do they? It always seems to me that all that exaggerated horror is the very thing to drive a man to extremes. It's just as bad to eat or smoke too much, only the consequences are not so conspicuous."

"You don't know what you are talk-

ing about. You-you can't."

"Oh, yes, I do, and I can. I told you, my brother—why, they were driving him to insanity with their insistence on the subject. I really was not very well, and I pretended to be worse, and took him away with me; demanded all his attention, you know; never hid any kind of drink from him, or let him know that I supposed he'd any wish to take it to excess, and in a few months he'd forgotten all about the 'curse,' as it was cheerfully called, and could drink his dinner wine like a civilized being. He lived long enough to show how good, and fine, and sweet—"

Her loving ardor enveloped him with its warmth. It was her brother whom

she had loved and defended; but it might have been-anybody.

"You are just wonderful!" he said.

under his breath.

He could not be sure whether she heard or not, for the roar of the sea was in their ears as they rounded the point and came out upon the little house, the waves all but washing its step, and the sentinel pines ringing it around.

"Oh, how glorious it is here!" she cried, drawing in deep breaths of the

salt and the pine.

"Yes, it is glorious now."

She pretended not to hear; put her hand to her belt. He caught it, and instantly released it.

"There's a clock inside," he said, "but

why?

"I wanted to see how long I might stay. It must be nearly half past six now, and I should start back by ten, at the latest. That will mean closing our celebration early; but Mrs. Grundy also boards with my old ladies.

He bowed his head.

"We will start back promptly at ten," he said. "Come, now, and be introduced

to my family.'

Kitty-cat was already mewing around the door, and she sprang out when the master opened it, and Chick-a-chick hopped down from his little perch back of the stove, and Couf-cout came and snuggled softly against the poor, gray coat, while the long, nervous, beautiful hands patted love into each little coat of hair, and fur, and feathers.

The woman turned away to the window, with a lump beneath her tongue. Such a bare little house, so comfortless for the master, so perfect for the little friends; a rough cot, barely covered, for himself, but warm little blankets for Kitty-cat and Cout-cout; scrupulous cleanliness everywhere; orderliness, too, save for the books which overflowed their plain pine shelf and spilled themselves upon window seat and table, one even lying on the shelf back of the stove.

She would not look, but, as by long acquaintance, she knew every twist and turn of those loving, caressing hands; and with all the power and instinct in

her, she longed to thrust her head beneath them, along with the cat and the The recognition of the feeling startled her so that she was surprised into a half-smothered exclamation. Instantly he was beside her, searching eyes upon her face.

"What was it?" he said.

frightened you?"

She regained her composure with an effort, though she was conscious of trembling.

"I suddenly discovered that I was terribly hungry. Can't we please

hurry on those chops?"

Her laugh was an achievement, but she knew that he was not deceived, that he had felt the shock of emotion which had run through her veins, and he let her see that he felt it before he turned away, with the twin to her laugh, and began the preparation of the feast.

Together they stirred the fire, and heated the broiler for the chops, and fed Kitty-cat her sardines; together they laid the plates on a clean, unironed cloth, and brought out the glasses, and uncorked the wine, and drank a small, silent toast, standing over the sizzling

chops.

It was very merry, at first. man had not eaten a substantial meal for a good many days, but he had had plenty of It, and he was used to much drink and little food. He was not hungry now, but he ate some and pretended to eat more, and secretly fed Kittycat and Cout-cout with the surplus.

He drank, though, and she had a little, which she took with appreciation and discrimination. He was brilliant, clever, scintillating; she understood, agreed, or disagreed, took the words from his lips, tossed him back his epigrams with an added twist, told stories, flashed him messages of good will and fellowship from her beaming eyes. He felt that rare exaltation which comes to the person who passes most of his days in fear of his own spontaneity, and who suddenly finds a kindred mind.

Then—it happened. He had known that it must be in a few days, but he had thought that he could stave it off

for a little while longer-a week or so. maybe. It had happened often before: he kept a small sum of money at a certain hospital against the time, but of late he had begun to think that it would be easier and better just to walk down to the sea and forget to go back. If there had not been Cout-cout and Kitty-

He was aware that they had not spoken for some time, and that she was playing with her fork, but the thing that held him was the huge monkey which he saw, peering over her shoul-He knew that it was not there, and that, by a supreme effort, he might go on talking, just as if he did not see it, for he had often done that, but the horror of the thing so near her robbed him of all his self-possession.

There is nothing in the world so dreadful as the face of one who sees the visions of drink madness, but the girl sitting opposite did not quiver. She took one long sip of the good wine, rose, and came steadily toward him, the phantom of his excesses leering behind her. She took his upraised hand quickly, in the impetuous way she had, and covered his eyes with the other.

"Do you see it now—so?" she asked. A long breath; then a burning, trem-

bling kiss upon her hand. "No, not now. But you-cannot-

stop it."
"Not altogether, perhaps, but I can help. Will you try to remember that?"

"Yes, I will-tr-

Then the unspeakable physical illness of the attack was upon him, and he did not know her, or anything but the

things which were not.

She did what she could, bracing her soul against the panic which threatened to overwhelm even her steady nerves. Kitty-cat and Chick-a-chick crept away somewhere, but Cout-cout sat immovable by the door, every hair alert, his honest, intelligent eyes fixed upon the lovely being who might need his assistance at any moment.

All through the dreadful hours of that night she rested upon his valiant little heart. If the love and sympathy of those wonderful dog eyes had not been so poured into hers, she knew that she would have fled, shrieking, into the night. Nothing in her experiences with her brother had prepared her for the tumult and clamor of a virile, imprisoned, loving, passionate, and embittered soul suddenly gone mad.

Sometimes the revelation of his anguish was so poignant that the tears leaped to her eyes, and once she stooped and gathered the dark head passionately against her breast, and kissed the mumbling lips with all that was in her.

It was four o'clock the next afternoon when an old darky came from the farm with a pail of milk and some eggs. She had a long talk with him.

"Lawd, no, missy, dar ain't nobody t' do nuffin' fer 'im. He jes' libes here, all 'lone. Folks at da farm don' nebber come down, 'ceptin' to git da rint, and thet ain't due fo' a long time yit. Lawd, no, missy, dis ol' niggah can't no way do no nussin'. Got mo'n he kin do now. No—no 'ndeedy, wouldn't no nuss come from town out yere to nuss him, not when folks done talk about him th' way day does; and him da kindes' man dat evah w-a-s born-yas'm. Co'se he could be move' t' town; but, Lawd, in dis shape, like he is now, 'twould kill 'm, suah. Yas'm-but mos' likely dar ain't nobody dat 'ud care, nohow.

She gave him money for provisions, told him not to say anything about her being there, and went back to the cot. What mattered the boarding house or Mrs. Grundy? A greater, a more primeval force than any social convention

kept her there.

It was four days before he knew her; six before he could speak coherently. She had sent the twenty dollars to its needful destination, and as funds ran low, two of her rings followed the way to her watch, the old darky coming every day, and doing her commissions with the faithfulness which is part of the race.

No one else came to the shanty, and she deliberately shut her eyes to the future. All that mattered were two eyes, dumbly beseeching, two hot, groping hands that pulled at her heartstrings.

On the sixth day, as she sat beside

him, busy with his water colors, he opened clear, lucid eyes upon her; but, absorbed for the moment, she did not

At last he spoke.

"A little more yellow there," he said. She put it in, without turning her

"Is that right?" she asked, regarding the branch of dry bittersweet critically.

"It's better," he said.

She went on with her work, but her hand would not be steady.

Presently he spoke again.

"It's no wonder that you don't want to look at me.'

She turned her face, but a little slowly, and he had half covered his own when he saw her eves.

"Not-disgust?" he breathed.

"No."

"Nor pity?"

"Why?"

"You do not need it."

He spread his hands in a gesture, eloquent of shame and poverty.

"Good God, child, why not?"

"You are still a strong man." The 'dog.

color rose in her face, but she met his eyes steadily. "It is because you are so much alone, and because there has been no one to love you."

The meaning behind her words was so tremendous that he could only gape

at her.

"You are not afraid-of It?" he

stammered, after a moment.

For answer she pointed to the open cupboard, and he saw there a full decanter of whisky, bronzely shining in the afternoon sun.

"It's very pretty, isn't it?" she said thtly. "A good friend in time of need, but never the master of a strong man, who-who is very greatly loved.

He found the strength to gather her against him, to kiss the small, delicate

ear, into which he said:

"Oh, love, my little love, tell me

your name!"

Cont-cout, who had sat bolt upright for upward of six days and six nights, a personified emergency bureau, walked over to the stove, sighed happily, and instantly fell asleep.

He was really a very intelligent little



FEBRUARY

HE hosts of Winter come with ice-shod feet And wind-blown locks of snow, And through the murky, mist-enshrouded street The white battalions flow.

I hear the clank of armor in the night, As glint of icy lance Gleams for a moment in the misty light Where nodding snow plumes dance!

I hear the marshaling winds their trumpets blow With blare and gusty might, And clattering sleet and the soft tread of snow All through the clamorous night.

But when at morn the sun with kindling glance Gives battle to the foe, Upon my window sill a broken lance Lies melting in the snow!

WILL LISENBEE.





XIM'S was ablaze with light. As I left the chill fog outside this raw midwinter morning an hour old, and entered the warmth and gavety within,

the vermilion-coated gypsy band swung into a spirited waltz—a waltz that made

one's midnight blood tingle. "Pardon, monsieur, s'il vous plait!" A veteran waiter, hurrying with a silver bowl of crushed ice and caviar, skillfully avoided my elbow. At the table beyond, a Russian archduke-a towering giant with a blond beard-crashed

his glass of champagne to the floor. The snave maître d'hôtel apologized. He had served in St. Petersburg.

I strolled on down the corridor lively with late suppers; past tables gay with jeweled beauty; past fair arms, fair necks, and the easy laughter of women forced to the rescue of their duller, white-waistcoated escorts. Young men blasé at twenty-three, old men young at sixty, immaculately valeted old roués, connoisseurs of pleasure at three score and ten. On past smiles that lied, smiles that told, the faint clean chink of gold, given kisses and the impulsive pressure of idle hands; past Beauty and her Beast, petty quarrels and conspicuous forgivings; and now past the band and into the generous square supper room beyond, animated with the flash of froufrous, silken ankles, and the glide of trim-slippered feet impelled by that throbbing, irresistible waltz.

Toilets of point lace, of silk, and of

satin. Blonde and brunette, rubies and pearls, white teeth and scarlet lips, warm, lithe arms and slender waists. The passing scent of violet and mignonette. The odor of lily of the valley. emeralds, dimples, and faultless sapphires—all whirling, eddving before the tables that seemed to circle in turn before the eyes of the dancers moving in a veil of aroma from fragrant havanas and gold-tipped cigarettes. Eyes that gleamed, and dreamed, and gleamed again in the game of love; and grew devilishly bright under the spell of sparkling, stinging golden wine, burning cold.

And a great wave of joy surged through me as I took my seat and unfolded a spotless napkin, for I saw that the world was still alive.

The waltz ended in a wail of strings. François, the maitre d'hôtel with the smug smile of a priest, bent an attentive. ear for my order-pad and pencil in hand.

"A dozen Ostend, François."

"Bien, monsieur."

"And then-a partridge en cocotte. You will please see that there is a little thin, crisp bacon of the English with the mushrooms."

"It is well understood, monsieur." "And a salad of endives with the partridge.'

"Bien, monsieur."

"Then we shall see for the rest."

"Très bien, monsieur. Monsieur is alone?"

I nodded.

"Sec or demi-sec?"
"Brut, nineteen hundred."
He nodded, and was gone.

A moment later, as I sat watching the entry of three monocled youths and a slim blond woman in an ermine opera cloak, I was conscious of a fair white hand and arm stretched across my table. "Bonjour!" came a frank, clear voice,

and I looked up.

"Natka!"I exclaimed as I grasped the fair white hand—a shapely, aristocratic hand without a jewel.

"Ah! You nice Natka!"

I would have said more in my enthusiasm, but she checked me with her eyes; and, as she seated herself beside me at the vacant table to the right touching mine, I caught sight of her companion. As for his name it does not matter. He was healthy, this young American, broad-shouldered and suntanned; and his genial, clean-shaven face suggested wealth and leisure.

As she unfolded her napkin, she leaned toward him, and whispered something in his sunburned ear, evidently in explanation of our meeting. He nodded good-naturedly in reply, his elbows on the table as he scanned the menu. Again Natka turned to me, her clear, fearless gray eyes studying, for a moment, my own, and my own taking in at a glance her handsome features the sheen of her auburn hair, and her tall, gracious figure, which seemed to have been poured into her gown of creamy rose point lace, adorned with a single blood-red rose. The gown of a lady—they are rare.

"Ah! That is nice," she said, with a look of eager interest. "You have made a success. The wise little supper of a prince. Am I not right?" She laughed deliciously. "I saw you order it." She laid her hand with a friendly pressure on my arm. "And I have seen last year one of your pictures," she continued, with a touch of friendly pride. "In a window on the Rue Lafitte. They do not put one's pictures alone in a window unless one has made a success."

"Success, my dear Natka? Oh, a very modest one, I assure you," I

laughed in return, somewhat embarrassed. "No, the truth is, I have just sold a picture. The one you saw in the window came back, and so I dropped in here to rinse my eyes. We poor painters crave the sight of luxury now and then; the spectacle of expense once in a while. It is as gay here as ever. I'm glad of that. Who is the girl in green?"

She raised her clear gray eyes where my own indicated, and gazed across the

smoke-veiled room.

"The little one with black hair and the white aigret?"

"Yes."

"It is La Belle Adèle. She is with Cora De Neville and the young Marquis De Tallefont. You must have seen De Neville at the Folies Marigny. She trains a pig with a little gilt whip. It is quite stupid. You see young Tallefont everywhere, His uncle is very rich. He is a very horrid old man." And she turned to her companion as my oysters and champagne were served.

I had not seen Natka in months; indeed, not since the Bal des Quat'z' Arts. She was strikingly beautiful that night, for she wore the black lace wedding costume of a Russian girl, with a curious peasant's headdress of jewels, barbaric rings, and her bare feet in sandals; and explained to me that the gown itself was an heirloom from her native Moscow.

It was the night we trundled Bardeau's little model—I forget her name, and only remember her good humor—from the Porte Maillot to the entrance of the ball in a wheelbarrow. The same morning, we—savages of the Stone Age and our captives—went in swimming after the ball in the fountain of the Rond Point.

She was as fascinating to-night as ever. The same Natka, the same good comrade whose intelligence alone was a delight, for, like many Russian women, she had at twenty-six years of age acquired a fluent knowledge of English, spoke French as well as a Parisienne, Italian enough to have satisfied a poet of Verona, and once, when a certain Spanish Don—the friend of a Russian

nobleman, the brother of the giant who had crashed his glass to the floor—came to Paris, he insisted that Natka could not be purely Russian, and must have had a Spanish grandmother, for, as he explained, "her Sevillian accent was remarkable."

The young American now craned his neck with a nervous grin, and for an instant our eyes met in forced recognition. Then he rose at Natka's bidding, and we were duly presented. As we reached over to shake hands, he grew quite red, and said genially:

"Glad to meet you. Won't you join us? Here, gar-son, take the orders."

But I alluded to my own supper forthcoming; and mentioned to him that the Baroness Natka Karézoff and I were old friends.

"Baroness!" he blurted out, the grin widening. "Say, Bill, don't kid me."

There ensued an awkward second—a pause; and we drank each other's healths from our own separate bottles. After all, if he did not know the truth about Natka Karézoff, I did. Even an instant later, when the maître d'hôtel addressed her as "Madame La Baronne," and the archduke, still in the best half of his Cossack exhilaration, stopped as he passed their table, straightened soberly and bowed, it failed to enlighten the one who had christened me Bill.

His geniality grew as he drained his wine; and there flashed a twinkle in his blue eve as he leaned over toward me.

"Bill," he confided, "I've got a thirst rare enough to preserve in the Louvre, sailing that slick old yacht of mine all day. Me for the sea, all right, Natka'll tell you. Say, but we made her hump fine and dandy. Ouite a blow, girl, eh? For an amateur, but she's game, Natka is," he added, as the cellarman in his black apron refilled his glass, crushing down a fresh quart in its cooler. "All game, my boy," he declared, with a pat of pride on her exquisite shoulder. "Thinks nothing of standing to the wheel herself on a two-hour watch. Slipped her back into Boulogne last night all by her little lonesome, and not a reef in her. My sailing master says

to me, says he: 'There ain't one woman in a million like mad—am.' You'd orter seen the Nargeala hustle. She flew, all right. Natka was at the wheel. My sailing master called it épatante when we got into the lee of the breakwater. See here, you speak French. What's épatante?"

"Out of sight," I explained.

"Good word, épatante—out of sight! Gee! He hit it!"

Natka laughed, not being able to grasp my translation of slang.

"Well, I guess," he continued reminiscently, kindling a fresh cigarette over the match Natka held for him. "Bad hole round that breakwater. Whole tide of the Channel runs through there like hell. Lots of rocks, son! Lots of rocks! Orter see Natka in tarpaulins. Say, she's great! Stands up and takes the salt, salt breeze! Well, say, can you beat it? And nary a whimper. Eh, girlie? Nary a whimper. More oysters, Natka? Say, you're all right."

She lifted her eyes to a passing waiter.

"A dozen of Ostend—quick!"

"Bien, madame."

"No, my friend," Natka laughed, "you must not get the ideas exaggerated of my bravery. I did very little, really. It is he who is brave," she confided in my ear. "Ah! It is fine to be able to rely on some one in an emergency. Not to fear, and to know what to do. Had it not been for him in the big storm off Trouville—very well, I saw that. I was there. It was not gay. He was magnificent. He knew the Nargeala better than his crew."

"How long have you been over?" he asked me, filling her glass, the wine seething over her protesting fingers.

"About sixteen years," I returned.
"You don't say! Say, Bill, if I'd been stowed away in this insane asylum for sixteen years, a free bus would take you to and fro to see the pansies growing over Willie's grave by now. Chicago for me on the long run! We got everything there they got here—only better."

The band broke into a two-step, and again the room was in a whirl. Pres-

ently they left me to dance, and, on their return, the archduke stopped to chat with Natka in Russian, and he roared with laughter over something, and bowed to us formally in recognition as he took his leave, much to the relief of the one who had called me Bill.

"He is very tall, is he not?" Natka, turning to me. "Good old Romanoff! He was so good to my peasants-poor people. In my country house near Moscow, you know what I did? Very well. I had built a large room for my peasants—a sort of great hall, and with big fires at each end, and long tables of good clean wood. Do you not love the smell of clean, fresh I adore it! And there they could come and have a good dinner when they pleased—whole families. Ah, it is not easy for them; they are so cruelly poor, and so ignorant; and in winter it is terrible-always the snow. They are like overgrown, unhappy children. And they are so grateful.

"And the house near Moscow?" I ventured, pressing her hand in rever-

"Ah, my dear friend!"

She shrugged her shoulders, and a lit-

tle sigh escaped her.

"Gone," she said simply. "My dogs, too. I should not have minded the house. There is an end to everything that is dear, that becomes dear. But my dogs, they were my children.'

For an instant she lowered her fair head, covering her eyes with her white, ringless hands-the hands that had steered the Nargeala safe into port. Then she turned to amuse the one who

had called me Bill.

Presently she turned to me, and said

softly:

"My house? Very well. An old friend of mine was in great trouble, so many rubles he lost at that stupid gambling. No, you don't know him. His mother was old, and his sister very sad. for she wished-what you say?-to be married."

And, without waiting for me to reply, she turned again to her companion, and helped him to a fresh slice of pâté de foie gras.

democratic way.

Chicagoan.

I could not help being convinced that he was a good chap; and, in comparison to the blase types and seasoned viveurs in the room, far more to be relied upon. He who was plain-spoken, sincere, and generous to a fault-qualities, I knew. which appealed to Natka-and without a vestige of pose about him; that artificial varnish which any Latin woman of the world accepts as skin deep. In case of real trouble, I should have chosen the

For some moments they talked ear-

nestly together. She was radiant now,

and I saw he was happy in his genial,

Maxim's was now full; and, with the breaking of the fog-chilled dawn without, it grew more and more hilarious; and there was some dancing at fourthirty that did not happen at two.

It was the hour evidently that Natka had been waiting for. Her sudden change of manner piqued my curiosity. She ran her eyes over the room, and seemed satisfied. It was the hour when what becomes of the remaining gold louis in one's pocket does not much matter.

Was she, like the girl in green, going to dance on her table? She could dance, when the mood seized her, with all the inborn grace and fire of a Russian. It would not have surprised me, knowing her impulsive temperament. But she soon dispelled my presentiment, for she spoke quietly to a passing waiter, who returned with a plate and napkin. What next? I wondered, as she skillfully folded the napkin in the form of a slipper, placed it on the plate, and, without a word, rose from her seat; the one who had called me Bill staring at her as soberly as he could.

"Natka!" I exclaimed, my hand on her arm. "What are you going to do?

Come, dear, sit down.

But she only smiled, and said quite seriously: "Don't move, either of you."

And I, despite my puzzled wondering, drew aside my table from her own to let her pass.

'Natka!" I repeated, and so did he; but she paid no heed to either of us, and crossed the room.

Then, to my amazement, beginning at the farthermost table in the corner, she made the round of Maxim's with her plate. The few words she addressed to each table were inaudible to me; but I could hear her clear "Thank you" as francs and louis were slipped within the damask slipper. She continued down one side and up the other of the corridor, and so on back to our side of the big room.

The slipper was coming our way now—a golden slipper, shaded by four crinkled bank notes of the Bank of France.

"Well, I'll be durned!" muttered the sunburned one from Chicago. He had grown as red as a poppy, and the collar of his dress shirt had wilted from perspiration.

The golden slipper was now between

"It is for the little maid of Lucille Davries, who has been frightfully burned," Natka explained.

Without a word, the one who called me Bill felt in the pocket of his piquet waistcoat, extracted a hundred franc note, and tucked it in the slipper.

"Thank you," she said, and turned to

I made a mental note of my bill, and contributed the remainder in my possession, modest as it was. Then followed our questioning as she regained her seat between us,

"Whose maid did you say? How burned?"

"By an alcohol lamp," Natka explained rapidly, as she poured the contents of the slipper into her jeweled purse and snapped the clasp shut. "Poor little thing! Is it not terrible? They say she will live. She is horribly disfigured—a cripple for life. Gaby De Villiers told me as we came in. It hap-

pened Sunday, heating the curling irons for her mistress."
"Who is Lucille Davries?" I asked.

"A demi-mondaine. I do not know her. She is a brute. Her boudoir is burned out. She flew into a rage, and would have turned the poor little thing out of doors had not the police arrived and taken her to the hospital. Ah,

Dieu! Can you imagine such a beast? The girl is barely seventeen—an orphan. Gaby gave me her name. She is at St. Louis, in the emergency ward. It shall be that I go there to-morrow."

She had spoken rapidly, and with such intensity that the color crept to her temples.

It was bright daylight when we left Maxim's.

"Bravo!" they shouted as the Baroness Natka Karézoff left the room. "Bravo! Bravo!" until her tall, handsome figure, wrapped in its cloak of soft gray fur, disappeared within the limousine of the one who called me Bill.

As I left them that morning, and walked back to my studio beneath the roofs in the Rue des Deux Amies, the streets were deserted, save by an occasional sleepy garçon de café hurrying home to bed and his family. At the corner of the Rue Mogador, I encountered a ragpicker's pushcart, its dingy sacks piled high and roped. The fat haul of the night's pickings was guarded by a girl of sixteen, strong as a terrier, and dressed from the gutter, her disheveled hair dull with dust; the black dog, chained beneath the cart, spick and span in comparison. It is a short walk in Paris from jewels to rags. Often it is but a step.

As I continued on past the Trinity, and so on up Montmartre, my thoughts were on Natka and the boy from Chicago. To be young in Paris, good-looking, with plenty of money, and fascinated by a woman of Natka's experience! What more could the owner of the Nargeala desire?

That he appreciated her good qualities as a comrade I was certain, and yet there lurked within him, I could see, a barrier of suspicion. This was natural. It is, moreover, racial, and typical of nine out of ten Americans of his kind in Paris. They are amused as long as a woman amuses them to the point which they have stipulated to themselves. Offer them a really serious amour, and they fight as shy as a closefisted bank president refusing a loan to a pretty widow. This is largely due to

inexperience and a meager knowledge

of Latin women.

If he had known Natka as well as I knew her, he would have done well to have turned the fortune of his youth over to her intact for safe-keeping. She would have saved most of it for him out of the heyday of his yachting youth, and returned to a sou the remainder of the amount in trust on the day of his inevitable departure for his native land.

He, however, did not know this, and, had I suggested it to him, would have first smiled grimly at the idea, and, secondly, pigeonholed me in his mind as a

crook.

That Natka seriously liked him I was also convinced. Fond of him, even. In love with him? Euh! That would be putting it a little strong. Natka had seen enough of love. What appealed to her now was comradeship, which is more lasting than volatile love. Moreover, I knew she was sincere, or she would never have known the Nargeala or its owner.

Weeks passed. Months, and I saw nothing of them, and heard nothing, save an announcement in the Paris edition of a New York journal, whose maritime news is reliable, that the Nargcala had touched at Capri bound south.

One afternoon in May, in the Bois, she flashed past me in her coupé, drawn by a superb pair of Russian horses. A glimpse of her only and she was gone. And I stood there beneath the acacias, feeling none too happy over this unex-

pected and tantalizing glimpse.

Again I saw her leave the Opéra Comique; but I lost sight of her in the crowd hailing their carriages. one night in September, I was standing in the Gare St. Lazare, awaiting the arrival of the Caen express, and met the Chicagoan face to face.

He was pale and haggard, and moved toward me, picking nervously at his

watch chain.

"Hello!" he stammered as we shook hands, his hollow, sunken eyes glancing furtively about him, with the fear in them of a cornered owl's.

The hand on the watch chain trem-

bled visibly. The whistle from an engine shrieked, and he started, jerking around on his heel from sheer nervous depression.

"You've been ill," I ventured. His lips tightened shakily.

"Come and have a drink," he returned gloomily, his eyes for the first time meeting my own.

"I'm waiting for a train due any minute," I said, by way of refusal. "It's a long time since I've seen you; not since that night in Maxim's with-

But I did not mention her name, not knowing what had occurred in the

meantime.

He snapped open his cigarette case, lighted a plain Maryland, hurriedly took a long, trembling whiff, and cast it aside, his eyes again searching the station and the crowd streaming along the transatlantic train that lay beside us ready for Cherbourg.

"Excuse me," he murmured, and pulled himself aboard the Cherbourg express, glanced at his hand luggage in a second-class compartment, reappeared,

and joined me.

"Sailing?" I asked.

He nodded. "And the Nargeala? I heard she touched at Capri.'

He looked at me blankly.

"She's no longer mine," said he. Then, with the ghost of a smile: "I'm hard hit."

For a moment he was silent, gazing at the smoldering butt of his cigarette,

his mouth twitching.

"Say!" he blurted out. "I want you to do me a favor. If you ever see Natka again-I-well-I want you to tell her I understood. I want you to thank her for me for all she did for me. I said good-by to her this morning. She'll understand it coming from you. I want you to tell her I understood. Just say understood. And thank her for what she did for me at Monte Carlo. I was a fool. I wouldn't listen to her. They'd have got it all if it hadn't been for her. She begged me on her knees. It's arotten game," he stammered hoarsely; "a rotten game." And his eyes filled. "I wouldn't care if it wasn't for dad.

He's been hard hit in wheat—he's done for."

I slipped my arm beneath his own, and he seemed grateful.

"You'll tell her? You won't forget?"
he pleaded as we paced before the train.
"You have my word," I replied.
"What is Natka's address?"

"I don't know. She's gone away," he said, in a weary voice. "She wouldn't tell me where. She made me promise I wouldn't try to find her."

The guard was slamming shut and locking the compartment doors.

"En voiture!" he shouted, red with importance.

There was a backward bump and a forward tension. He stretched out his hand, and I grasped it as he climbed in past the knees of a lady's maid and a valet in a steamer cap.

"Tell Natka I understood," he murmured as he closed the door, and the express slipped away on her journey as the headlight of the incoming train from Caen glared into view.

All that I have described happened twelve years ago; and, although Maxim's was still ablaze nightly until gray dawn, the old life of Paris had undergone a change. It had grown less *intime*, and more commercial, and many of the familiar faces of old comrades had disappeared.

So had Natka Karézoff; and, though my daily life led me over the same trail through bohemia it had led me for years, I heard or saw nothing of her; and gradually she became a vague memory of the past, My old haunts were now filled with the new generation. Fashions, too, had changed. It was an age now of the lamp-shade hat and the aëroplane. Even Montmartre had been affected by the epidemic of up-to-date The French-monocled modernism. youth now shot by, sunk in the barrel seat of his hundred horse-power racer. The girl beside him, imprisoned in her hobble skirt, interlarding her French with English sporting terms. All these were in vogue now, and the old life was

In Montmartre, close to the Place

Pigalle, is an American bar. Most of the ladies who frequent it at midnight possess a marquise turquoise ring on their manicured forefinger, and a fox terrier on a scarlet leather leash, who is loosed in the early morning hours to gamble over the dusty carpet with other fox terriers he knows but slightly; and, as fox terriers will be fox terriers, is shrilled at by its owner in the lampshade hat for his disobedience.

"Will you come here, Bob?" And she slides off her bar stool, and, catching him by the scruff of the neck, proceeds to chastise him accordingly as she had read in her dog book, "The Dog and His Master."

The room to-night was less lively in its forced gayety than usual, being the evening after the steeplechase at Auteuil, and life to most of its habitués seemed less worth living than ever.

I sat on the end of the row of high stools before the bar talking to Emile, the barkeeper, over the nonappearance of that absent-minded friend of mine, Joinville, the painter, who had stipulated the bar a half hour past as a meeting place; and I was still waiting with my back to the fox terriers and their gossiping owners. Never wait for Joinville, he has the memory of a moth.

As Emile drained a sweet Martini through a tea strainer, I accidentally touched the elbow of the woman on the stool beside me.

"Pardon, madame," I apologized, without turning my head.

Emile slipped the wet Martini to the third stool, added a straw, and wiped his fat pink hands.

As I reached for a match, my eye glanced over the figure of the woman next to me whose elbow I had touched. The broad-brimmed hat of rough blue felt that hid her face was faded, out of shape, and trimmed with two artificial roses that had once been red. She sat with her elbows on the bar, her body wrapped in a worn ulster, the pocket next to me torn down at the seam. I caught sight now of her ringless hands, and made a mental note of her age. Then I glanced at her feet resting on the rung of the stool, and saw that the

yellow Oxford tie next to me had been

patched.

Then, for some unaccountable awkwardness on my part, over went the remnant of my bottle of soda, and she tilted back away from the drip, and turned.

"Ah, madame!" I exclaimed. "I de-

mand a thousand pardons."

The smile with which she had straightway forgiven me now faded to a swift, searching look, and I gazed at her—at her gray eyes, at her auburn hair streaked with gray.

"Natka!" I cried.

"Mon Dieut" she replied wonder-

ingly.

Gradually her face became radiant, a flush crept to her temples. She faced me, putting out both her hands. I grasped them, and held them trembling in my own.

"Natka!" I repeated, in my astonish-

ment.

"Hush!" she whispered.

"Let us get out of this. I feel faint. Come! Come now!" she murmured.

She slipped from her stool, and, before the rest of the room had remarked

it, we were in the street.

"Stand here in the shadow," she pleaded faintly; and in the shadow she fell to sobbing, while I patted the shoulder beneath the worn ulster until she ceased crying. And when she had stopped before the mirror of a closed cake shop, and wiped her tear-stained face and adjusted the faded hat, she bravely smiled.

"Come," I insisted, "and have some supper. We must talk. To Tabarin's," I suggested, halting as we turned down

the Rue Pigalle.

"No, not there," she whispered. "They would not admit me in there." She leaned close to me, gripping my arm, still whispering a strange, hoarse whisper, as if she were afraid of her own voice. "Ah, I am so glad! So very happy!" she breathed.

Again I insisted on a restaurant. She stopped, and said in the mysterious voice of a child suggesting an adven-

ture.

"Do you know what I should like?

Some sauerkraut," she whispered eagerly, her voice gaining strength. "Come, I will show you."

She laughed nervously.

"Oh! Such good sauerkraut they have there. It is not far to walk—at the Lion D'Or. You are not angry? Tell me, you are not angry? It was not nice of me to ask. It is not far. No, no, not a fiacre! It is foolish to spend for that. Your hat is old. You are poor. It is not dear, the sauerkraut—seventy-five centimes the portion; and they give you plenty. And four sous to the waiter—you shall see."

And at the Lion D'Or I wrung the truth out of her over the steaming sauerkraut. The details much of which I refuse to write. It was a story from her lips, a simple story of kindness to others—massive in its truth, inevitable in its end; and it was the bitter end that she now endured without a murmur.

It is less hard to find a man hungry than a woman. The Archduke Romanoff was dead; and, when I suddenly recalled and gave a message from the past, she "understood"; and I feared for a moment she was again about to

"You saw him? Yes, it is true what you say. You saw him that night when he went away?" she demanded, with all the intensity of her being. "And he told you I would understand. I tried so hard to make him understand—to understand that he must go, that he must never see me again. Ah, my poor Dick! My poor Dick!"

And for the third time she hung eagerly on my words, making me repeat slowly all that he had said, even to his manner and the way he looked—a wreck. But I did not tell her how far his nerves were gone, clear as the memory came back to me now.

"You loved him," I said when she had grown calmer; and there came a strange, broken look in her eyes, and her tired face dropped in her hands, her nails pressing her flushed temples.

For some moments she did not speak. "Then one lived," she said slowly, looking up, "and now it takes so long to die. I tried to save him," she went

on, brushing away her tears. "That last week at Monte Carlo, I drew from my Paris bank, I wired to Petersburg, to poor Romanoff, that was the hardest—and what I had sent for went with his own. Ah, Dieu, it is so cruel, so stupid—that horrid gambling. It was that last night of baccarat that we quarreled. He was blind with anger, and out of his head. He accused me of being a thief, for I had taken from him fourteen hundred francs. It was well I did; it paid his voyage home."

The two girls opposite our table in the corner with pink plumes had gone. We were alone. The shirt-sleeved proprietor was yawning as he carved a

ham.

It was gray dawn.

Natka glanced at the clock hanging above the desk.

"My train will leave in an hour," she said. "You must not wait, you are tired."

"Train! My dear old friend, and to

where, may I ask?"

She was her old self again, warmed by the food, comforted, no doubt, by the hazard of our meeting and our long

talk of the past.

"To Argenteuil," she announced. "No? Did I not tell you? We have had so much to say. Yes, that is where I live—Amélie and I. You remember Amélie who was burned?" And then, with the same mysterious, childlike eagerness, she whispered again: "We have a little house. Oh, very small! Three rooms, and a roof." She laughed as she described it. "And then there is the garden for my chicks. They are adorable—so fuzzy—so little. They are a great care; but one must live, and in winter our eggs bring three sous apiece."

She mistook the gaze in my eyes.
"Forgive me," she said. "You are tired. It will not be long now to wait for my train. You must leave me and

go to bed."

"No," I protested. "I shall leave you, and you shall go to bed. Here is my studio key. It is the same brown door at the head of the stairs. You see, I have been faithful to my nest beneath the roofs. I have not moved. There is the big divan in the little room off the studio. Do you remember?"

But she hesitated.

"Amélie will worry. And, besides, it is not right for me to disturb you."

"Nonsense!" I returned. "Vantin is at Juvisy. He has the studio below me. He left me his key."

She hesitated no longer.

I waited until noon, entered my studio by the back door, and rapped gently at her own. No response.

"Natka!" I called; but the room be-

neath the roofs was silent.

I turned the knob, and pushed the door ajar. She was lying on the divan fully dressed. The collar of the worn ulster turned up over her hair, damp from the stupor of profound slumber, a rug thrown over her feet. I tiptoed in and leaned over her, listening to her regular breathing.

Poor dear! She was no longer beautiful; but she was beautiful to me. Her small, wrinkled leather purse lay on the table. It was indiscreet of me; but I pressed its flat side with my thumb. Two solitary sous grated together with-

in

And there I sat, and watched the Baroness Natka Karézoff until long after one, when she stirred, awakened with a start, rubbed her eyes, remembered, and smiled "Bonjour."

You may hunt through Argenteuil today, but you will not find her, for she lives in a comfortable, modest little apartment in Montmartre. Neither the street nor the number concerns you. Certain painters had passed the plate for Amélie. Natka would not have it otherwise.





BY WAY OF BETTY Sourtney Ryley Cooper



LEN HARNDEN'S eyes were deep sunk and framed in rims of black. Before him, the pad of paper seemed to jump grotesquely forward, and then

away again. His fingers felt thick and cumbersome. His head ached. His

clothing was damp and cold.

"Got 'em yet, Betty?" he asked of
the girl at the telegraph key a few feet

"Not yet," came from the other, as she tapped the key. "How much time have you got?"

"Two hours. Wish you'd rush 'em."
Then he clasped a clumsy hand about a pencil, and reached for the paper. The

girl watched.

"My, but it looks good to see you!" she said. "It's been a long time, hasn't it?" Then, receiving no answer from the man who, as his eyelids sank and rose again, bent far over the pad of the paper in front of him, she continued: "And I've been locked up here three days—with nothing but canned tomatoes and crackers to live on. The current's been too swift for anybody to venture out, except to-day. How on earth the line has stayed in is more than I can see. The poles must be washed out in a dozen places, but I guess they've kept the wires above the water some way."

"Got 'em yet?" came the sleepy query.
"I wish you'd get 'em. I'm about all in."

"The Gazette? Well, go ahead, Glen, and get a little ahead of me with the

story, and I'll catch up just as soon as they give me the connection."

Again the girl bent over the key, and, repeating time after time the signal, waited for a response. There was none.

"Suppose that line's dead?" she asked finally. "No, it isn't, either. It doesn't sound like it. I'll get them in a minute, Glen. Just keep on writing. Say, you ought to have been here when this flood came on us. I never saw anything like it."

"Everything gone?"

"In the town? Well, everything that's worth anything. I don't guess we'd mind that so much, or the farm lands around here, if it wasn't for the loss of life. You see, a lot of people were caught in the streets, and couldn't get into the second stories in time. You got the list of the drowned, didn't you?"

"Yes."
Quiet came for a few minutes, broken only now and then by the efforts of the girl as she attempted to get connections with the office of a newspaper in a faraway city, and the soft sound of a pencil as it scratched across the paper. Suddenly the girl looked up.

"Glen," she said, "why didn't you write to me after you went away?"

"I was too busy, Betty."
"Then—" And the voice of the operator had a queer little quaver to it. "Then, does that mean the usual thing?"
"What?"

"What do you suppose it means when —well, when a boy and girl grow up in

a little town together, as we did, and then the boy goes away to a city, stays two months, realizes a few of his ambitions, and then never writes the girl he promised to think so much of."

"But, Betty, you know I never was a

letter writer.

"I'm not scolding, Glen, or anything of that kind. But honestly, I was almost glad to see the river rise up and flood the town. It gave me something

else to think about.

"Now, don't talk that way," the other "Honestly, girl, I promised pleaded. myself every day that I would write. and every day-well, I just had to let it go by the board. I haven't had such an easy time as you people back here in Craigstown think. It's been work every minute-work, work, work! It's make good or fall by the wayside in the city, and there's a lot of difference between the Gasette and the little paper here in town, where life goes on just like a wound-up affair. Here I am on my first out-of-town assignment. It has taken me three days to get here, three days of wading, and boating, and swimming. But does the office think of that? No. all the telegraph editor is thinking of right now is the fact that I've got a story, and that I ought to be shooting columns of it into the paper for the next edition. And here I am, with two hours to work in-too much time ordinarily. But now-well, Betty, my thoughts won't come, they just won't come! I've written three pages, and I can't get any farther. I can't seem to think-I don't seem to---"

"Better get some cold water on those

eyes. Hurry! I've got them!"
"Any messages?" the young man asked, as he found the pail of cooling water, and dashed a handful into his Then he turned drowsily to watch the slight form of the girl as she took the message from the wire and handed it to him:

Rush story. Cut out the melodrama, and stick to plain facts. It makes the best varn HASKELL, Managing Editor.

Already the girl had reached for the few pages of copy that Harnden had pinched from his drowsy brain. Harnden tried to hurry himself to the table again and seize the pencil. But his feet were plodding, his eyes found a strange fascination in watching the finger of the operator as it flashed up and down with the key of the telegraph instrument. She had finished the few pages, and was again reaching toward him.

"Hurry!" she said tersely.

Harnden pushed his pencil harder. One page was finished, and given into the waiting hand.

"I'm sleepy," he said slowly.

"Yes, I know, but come on. better hurry, Glen."

The animosity which had gathered for a moment seemed to have left the voice now.

"I'm-

The girl turned. The head of the other had drooped lower and lower. The pencil had fallen from the fingers, the arms had slumped upon the desk. Harnden was asleep.

The telegraph was calling its rasping, hurrying rattle of "R-u-s-h!" The girl jumped from her chair to the side of

Harnden.

"Glen!" she called, "Glen! Glen! You've got that story to finish! Wake up! Glen, the office is calling you, wake

up! Wake up!"

She grasped his shoulders and shook him. A slight mumble escaped the lips, but that was all. The eyelids did not even quiver. Again that machine on the other desk was calling. The girl started toward it-and stopped. Then she turned suddenly, and hurried to the sleeping form. A sudden determination had come into her mind. She again seized the shoulders of the sleeping one, and shook him, almost viciously. He did not awaken. Then, only for a moment, did she deliberate.

"He ought to have some notes or something about him," she said, half aloud. "If I can get those-maybe

they'll show what-

Now her hands were in his pockets, picking out a scrap of paper or a bit of pencil. Finally, her eyes gleamed. From an inside pocket were brought forth several sheets of paper, folded and creased. It was all a new experience to the girl of the telegraph. What she knew of newspapers—city ones, at least—was only what she had read in them. What a column meant, or what the fundaments of writing were, she knew not. One thing she had heard spoken of was notes. They were in her hands now, and perhaps they would aid her, perhaps there would be—

She had unfolded the creased bits of paper, but there, instead of the hurried notes of a reporter, were three words above the fold, three words which sent into the heart of the telegrapher a chill worse than that of the gray waters of the flood, three words, that ran:

My Dearest Husband-

So this was the reason that he had not written during the two months in the city! Carefully Betty folded the letter again, and laid it on the desk, near the sleeping Harnden. This was the reason then; he was married. Betty understood now, and she walked back to her chair with a leaden step that contrasted strangely with her quickness of a few moments before.

The gray sky without seemed to have darkened still more in the last few seconds. The lapping of the waters of the Merrimac where, in their overflow, they had invaded the streets and even the homes of Craigstown, carried a somber, heart-deadening note into the little room of the telegraph. This was the reason then, this was the reason—she kept repeating it over and over again—this was the reason!

P-l-e-a-s-e R-u-s-h!

It was that hateful telegraph. With a bit of savagery in the movement, the girl shot back the key to break the connection,

"I'll have that much satisfaction," she

said bitterly. "I'll have-

But would it be a satisfaction? The girl looked again at the sleeping form and the bit of paper beside him, with its story of duplicity. What was she like, this wife? Betty wondered. Perhaps— Then again came that little query into her brain. What would happen to Harnden when the story failed to come, and what would happen to her,

the girl he really loved, the girl he had married?

Betty listened to the query. Then she leaned toward the key and opened it. The operator was still at the other end of the line, plugging away with his "R-u-s-h—R-u-s-h!" and striving for some answer to his questions. A message began to tick its way into Betty's ears:

HARNDEN: Rush rest of flood story. What's wrong? Have only about hundred words. Want four thousand. HASKELL.

Something popped into Betty's brain, and she smiled to herself as she answered:

Story coming. Lines been out somewhere. Operator couldn't get through. HARNDEN,

Then, for a moment, she paused to gaze out of the window, and down into that place of water and flatboats where a street had once been. "If I could just get it started!" she exclaimed. "If I

could just get it started!"

Then she thought of a way. After all, the story of the flood was her own. She had seen it, she had watched from this second-story window the encroachment of that great wave when the dam broke above the town. She had seen the solid rush of water coming across the fields just beyond the store there; she had watched the men and teams as they struggled to evade the cold embrace of the great wave; she had heard the screams of women and children; she had been a witness to every little tragedy. It was to be her story as she had seen it, from the beginning. Again she turned to the telegraph key, and, letter by letter, began to trace the details.

"I'm just telling it to a friend," she kept saying over and over to herself. "Now, watch yourself, girl. Don't get frightened just because this is going to a newspaper. Just remember that you're simply telling every little thing that happened to the fellow at the other end of the line. Now, tell them first what happened when the town found out that the dam had broken. Then tell them how the women screamed and rushed out of the stores, and horses neighed and reared when the water began to rush into the streets, and close around them

everywhere. Then, remember how you threw a piece of rope across to the grocery store to get provisions to keep you from starving, and how the clerk, standing on a counter, picked them off the shelves? Tell them that, too. Tell them how those who lived in the frame houses got up on the roofs, and how Jim Hardacre and the rest of them drowned in the big eddy. Now, just have confidence in yourself, Betty. You'll get it all right."

Suddenly she found that under her own influence she had passed the worst stage, the beginning, and now was far into the story. Things began to come more smoothly now. The descriptions became more varied, and Betty began to discover adjectives, and sentences, and compositions that she never knew existed in her brain before. After all, it had been thrilling, the coming of the flood, and there had been a myriad things of interest about it.

One by one she recalled them, and told them over the wire to the man at the other end. Now and then, queer little thrills shot up and down her spine as she related the death of some one as it had been shouted from house to house by refugees in the upper stories.

An hour had passed. Betty had no idea of the number of words she had sent, nor did she care. She had a story to tell now, and gradually the story was stretching forth, revealing new things to her brain, bringing up the aid of imagination where imagination was needed, sticking close to sordid facts when those were available. One by one the minutes tolled away, as the girl, almost panting, bent farther and farther over the instrument.

The fever of nervousness burned her face. She felt that her eyes were unduly bright and blazing, she realized that the one free hand was twitching, and clenching, and pounding on the desk in the excess of her excitement.

Another half hour had gone. The story of the great wave had passed now, and it was with the doings of the town since the flood that the telegraph key was dealing. Gradually this passed, too.

Betty looked up. She had finished, with fifteen minutes to spare.

For a moment she sat there breathless, rubbing her hands to restore the flow of blood after the siege at the key. The instrument had been silent nearly five minutes. Then it again took up its clicking:

HARNDEN: Great story. Written in just the right style. Simple facts are always best. Come in when possible. Thanks of the Gazette for good work.

HASKELL, Managing Editor.

And there he was, still asleep on the table, still with that hateful bit of folded paper resting calmly by him. A revulsion of feeling seemed to rush over the little girl of the telegraph. She picked up the message, and glanced over the words.

"Great story," she quoted. "I wonder whether he cares. Well," and she sighed ever so softly, "I've done my best."

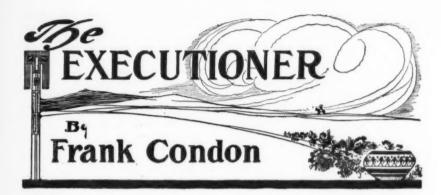
She walked to the form of the sleeping one, and then, bending over, laid the message where he would see it as soon as he awakened. Then she recoiled. Her hand had touched that bit of folded paper, filling her with a feeling of aversion, of horror.

What was contained in the rest of it? What had this woman said to the man that Betty had believed was hers? She struggled a moment against temptation—and then she yielded. Slowly she raised the letter, slowly she unfolded it, and slowly she began to read:

MY DEAREST HUSBAND: This may never be found by you. I am putting it in a bottle in the hope that perhaps some one may find it and carry you my last message. The water has surrounded the house, and gradually is undermining it. If any one, not my husband, should find this, take it to George T. Baker, Clintonville. A last kiss from your wife and chil—

There Betty stopped. Before her was the last written testimony of a tragedy, perhaps of several lives. But, notwithstanding, the little girl laughed, and a bit heartily perhaps, as she looked at the clock and hurried to the telegraph instrument.

"Guess I'll put this on the wire," she said. "The paper might want it."





E were sitting on the pine fence in front of Maloney's Café, in Carey City, watching a man in blue overalls while he heaved cabbages from a South

Bend wagon into a Santa Fé freight car.

Denver Joe Phelps was drawing smoke into his lungs from one of my favorite cigars, an unshaven picture of peace and calm joy. Occasionally he edged along the rail to keep pace with the sheltering shadow of a telephone pole.

"Did I ever tell you about the time I shot a fellow in Haynes' Saloon—Haynes, that ran the restaurant and caffay over at Wading River?" he inquired in a meditative manner.

"No," I replied briefly, and without curiosity.

"Well, I did," he continued, rubbing the ash of his cigar against a nail. "Of course, I killed him. It ain't much of a story, but it sort of leads to disputations and events, and for some reason—probably the blistering sun this afternoon—the whole business keeps simmerin' around in my capacious intellect, and demanding attention. Maybe if I spilled the feverish and highly ornate allegory over your shrinkin' mentality, I'd feel cooler and more sedative."

"Surge right ahead," I said encouragingly. "I am in a peculiarly spongy state of mind myself, and you can't hurt me. Did the man die at once?" "The man don't figure in these annals except as a starting point. In other words, he don't count. He was a nogood, all-around, sneakin' scoundrel, and he had frequently expressed a pointed intention of smearing my inoffensive carcass across the surface of Webb County. Gettin' off to a quick start, so as to get him out of the picture as soon as possible, and thereby relieve it of disagreeableness, the shooting was this

"Me, and Jim Roberts, and Tad Miller was shakin' dice in the Haynes' Emporium. All was quiet, and the drinks came regular. This man came into the bar, and jimmied his way into our crowd without invitation, and in spite of my elbowed protest into Miller's ribs. We shook dice some more, and this man did something that a natural crook always does when he's handlin' dice. I called his attention to it in the proper manner, and without further details he proceeds to carry out his purpose of smearin' me.

"I used to handle hardware very smooth and sudden in those days, and before he got me I got him. That's all there was to it, except burying the remains. I went away from Wading City to avoid public comment, bein' a superlatively modest man. The crook's name was Hugo Dalton.

"They tried me with formality and speed, and not having my body to try, they had to be satisfied with my spirit. Miller, and Roberts, and a bunch of unexpected onlookers testified, and the jury came in with a vote of thanks for me, and a set of engraved resolutions or something. I read about it in a St. Louis paper."

"Did you go back to Wading River?"

I inquired.

Denver Joe clasped his hands about his knees, and stared through the heat waves at the unflagging cabbage hurler. He pulled at the cigar without haste until the end was tipped with a rosy spark.

"I did not. I kind of got the habit of wandering around, and I began to like it. I worked in the freight house in St. Louis pushin' a flat-wheeled truck, and from there I jumped to Chicago, where I got a job checkin' up the street-car conductors, and seeing that the company pulled down some share of the swag.

"After that I ambled overland in various guises and conveyances, wonderin' part of the time why the Lord had created me, and whether there was any particular niche waitin' for my predestined appearance and occupation. I rastled with this solemn thought through most of the State of Pennsylvania, and one day the whole business settled itself, as most things will if you wait long enough and don't crowd 'em.

"I had been standing around watching the preliminary maneuvers of seven thousand dagos who were going to build a bridge, and finally the boss white man noticed my sodden inactivity, and offered me a job in the operating department. I accepted it with moderate and subdued enthusiasm, and asked for time off to hunt up a home and find out the name of the community in which the possession of the job made me a citizen.

"The place was popularly known as Silver County, and the principal town near our forthcomin' bridge answered to the call of McGill, and about three hours after I became an employed citizen of McGill and environs, I had located lodg-

ings and food.

"As I said a minute ago, I had been wonderin' about my continued existence and the desirability thereof. The hunt for a McGill home and grub while I evolved this new bridge with the dagos

settled the question. I asked five thin, bony women if they wanted a respectable boarder, and they answered me in a foreign tongue and considerable irony. The last one pointed down a corrugated hill, and opined that I might land all right if I knocked on the door of a green house standin' in front of a blond barn.

"I walked down the hill in discomfort and hopelessness, and a girl came to the door of the green house, and listened to

my eloquent speech.

"Then she got her mother to come and hear the rest of it, and we concluded the deal in no time. Their names were Mrs. Dalton and Miss Dalton."

"I presume," I remarked, wrinkling my nose and regarding Denver Joe with a glance of weary skepticism, "that, being of the same name as the man you shot, they were some relations of his.'

"Nothin' more close than mother and sister," he went on, without heeding "It sounds remarkably like the long arm of omnipotence, but that's what they were, and when I found it out, which I did that same night, sitting in front of a chestnut soft-coal stove and watchin' the mother knitting and the daughter fixin' a hat, I did some hasty thinking, and I felt just a trifle uneasy.

"The biggest shock to me was the girl. Before I met her, and if I hadn't known anything about it. I would have bet you four million dollars against this unhappy seegar that she couldn't have been any sister to Hugo Dalton. She was all sweetness, and mildness, and gentleness, and kindness, and pleasing outward good looks, and he was-well, he was just a bum; a low-lived, unprincipled skunk. That's one of the things about nature that always had me winging. How those two both could have had that peaceful old lady for the same mother is something I never tried to understand, and yet there wasn't the slightest manner of doubt about it.

After we got better acquainted, they asked me questions about my life, and I told a whole lot of truth about some things; and then again, about others, I was as mute as mud. I told them that I was a fairly well-behaved sort of mutt,

and that I knew I was going to like them both from the blow-off, and that I hoped they'd like me enough to stand havin' me around while I was buildin' this bridge with the wops."

"'You're from the West, aren't you?" says the girl, about two days after we become friends. 'I knew you were by your talk. Were you ever in Wading City?"

"To which I made some sequential retort, and then comes the whole story, the first part of which I doped out the night before without any help from either one

of them.

"I sat on a soap box out in the back yard, and held my head a long time; and the more I thought about what I ought to do, the worse my head ached. I got up once, and wandered up to my room, where my total belongings were resting on a window sill, and did a little business with the crazy notion of goin' away from there immediate and speedy. figured out the first sentence of a letter which I thought of leavin' under the door after they both went to bed. The way the girl talked about her brother well, there's no use goin' into details, but she had an idea that he was a regular man. She hadn't seen him in years, so he must have changed a lot. And the more I listened to her talk, the more I felt like selling myself for dog meat. I had to be symppathetic, too-imagine that, will you?

"Somehow or other I stuck along; and, after the first day or two, there wasn't any talk about the defunct relation. I worked from seven in the morning until early afternoon, and then I'd come home-I began to call the green house home with amazing ease. And Verna and I would sit out in the yard under some elm trees and discourse. My Western experiences were always interestin' to her, and I gabbled freely. Also I looked at Verna without any effort whatever, and in the course of time I concluded that whatever sentiment my parents had bestowed upon me in my childhood was rapidly breakin' loose from its hidden moorings and swashin' up to the surface. I liked that girl.

"One day she surprised me a little by

comin' down to the bench under the trees with a gun about ten inches long. She laid it down on the pine table that usually held her sewin' basket, and asked me if I thought it was a good gun. I glanced at it, and informed her that there was none better.

"'I'm glad it's a good gun,' she said. 'I've been shooting with it a long time.'

"'You don't look like any regular shooter I ever saw,' I says, smiling at her hands, which were about as large as 'What do you two fifty-cent pieces.

shoot when you're shootin'?'

"'You needn't make fun of me, Mister Phelps. I've been practicing with this revolver for a year, and I'm not such a bad shot as you might think. Since you came to live with us. I've been too busy to keep up my target practice, but to-day I was thinking that you might teach me. I suppose you can shoot?'

"'I can shoot some,' I replied, with justifiable modesty. 'And, furthermore, it will give me exceeding joy to help you learn this useful art. Whatever do you

shoot at?

"She displayed to me the side of the barn. It was all speckled up, as though somebody had accidentally turned a Gatling on it, and I began to grin enjoyably.

"'Viewin' the barn as a fittin' and suitable target,' I says, with clandestine mirth, 'I would suggest that we put an extra story on the roof, and build a couple of wings. I would certainly hate to be ridin' along behind the barn when you are in the throes of your target practice.

"'I knew you'd laugh,' she says, smil-in' herself, 'but I made all those bad shots when I started. The gun was too heavy, and it wabbled dreadfully. But now I shoot better. I'll show you.

Here's what I shoot at.'

"Then she emerges a potato from the pocket in her apron-a small potato, too, about as big as a gents' size peanutand dangles it at the end of a string, which she affixes to a nail on the side of

the barn.

"I observe that she is about to commence the demonstration, and my former knowledge of ladies engaged in shootin' off guns leads me to a respectful and silent position behind one of the elms.

'Verna sits down and rests her elbow on the pine table, and in a second there's nothin' but a wavin' string on the side of the barn. Six bullets clean through the potato about as fast as I could have done it myself.

"'There!' she says, flushed and proud. 'How do you like that, Mister Phelps?

"I came out from behind my shelterin' elm, and shook hands with her.

"'I don't guess I can teach you much more about it,' I says gallantly. 'I might show you a few tricks with a gun, but you're all there with the good eye.'

"Verna smiled in a pleased way, and then I went upstairs and dug out my old forty-four pal of discredited days. It was covered with rust, but I shined it up a bit, and got the joints workin' before long, and we spent the afternoon pluggin' away at the barn. I showed Verna how to drive nails into the boards at twenty paces, and how to snuff out can-She tried hard, but she missed oftener than she hit; and the oftener she missed the more determined she became.

"We spent the merry afternoons in this harmless pastime, and Verna got so that she could sniff the ash off my cigarand at twenty paces that's pretty good. At first I held the cigar between my fingers, and on notable occasions I stuck the smoke between my teeth and stood up against the barn with my head turned to one side. She never missed the ash. There ain't many people in this world that can shoot at a cigar in my face, but I knew that little hand on the pine table wouldn't shake.

"And when we'd get through target practice, Verna would be excited, and delighted, and something else all at once. I often noticed this something else in her eyes, and finally I had to say something about it. I remember that afternoon with alarming distinctness.

"'I've been thinking,' I began, when we were resting after a bombardment, 'and I've been wondering and wondering. You don't look or talk or act like a girl that would go in for such pastimes as shootin' with a six-cylinder gun, and

once in a while I've noticed your smile fade away, and when that happens there's an extra solemn look in your eyes. Maybe it's all my imagination, and maybe it isn't. Do you get any real fun out of it?"

"'Joe,' Verna replied-and by that time she was callin' me Joe right along, 'I'm not shooting at a mark because I There's another reason, and since we got to be such good friends, I've been intending to tell you about it. I guess the time's come.'

"She sat with her hands folded in her lap, and there was the same old something in her blue eyes as she went on. I felt a little bit queer myself.

"'Go right ahead,' I said. 'I want to know.'

"'I told you once before about what happened-what happened out in Wading City. You haven't forgotten that, of course. A long time ago, our folks came from the South. Father died years back, and mother isn't the same as she used to be. I don't know why I feel as I do about it, but there's something in my blood-something in me that's made me take up the pistol practice. I guess it's part of the old feud instinct that says one life must pay for another. I don't want to do what I must do some day.

"'What must you do some day?' I asked. I knew before she replied.

"'A man-some man killed my brother. He shot him down like a dog. and like a dog he in turn will be shot down, and I am the only one left to do it. I cannot bear the thought of giving any one-even a murderer-physical suffering. I could never stand the memory of maining or crippling another human being, no matter how bad he was. I must shoot, and the bullet must go true; and when the time comes, the man who shot Hugo will fall from a bullet-but he will not suffer. He will die instantly. That's why I have practiced target shooting. That is why I shoot so well, and that is why I have

asked you to help me.'
"I remember now," Denver Joe continued, pausing long enough to attach himself to a fresh smoke, "that while Verna was talking my cigar went out. I

can remember a funny kind of cold chill that chased itself up and down my spinal column. It wasn't fear—it was just plain surprise. I reached over to where her hand lay on the table, and patted it a couple of times. There were hard, harsh lines in her face that didn't belong there at all.

"'You don't know who shot your brother, do you?' I said, after thinking a long time. She shook her head.

"'I will go West,' she replied. 'I will go to Wading City myself. I will find

him somehow.'

"I sat still and looked at Verna for ten minutes without saying a word. I realized that I loved her, and, inside me, I sneered at Fate for the way the cards had fallen. Once I picked up our guns, and examined them. They were both loaded. Then I put them in my pocket, and stood up before Verna, and lighted the dead cigar. I believe that during those ten minutes I did some of the fastest thinking on record, and when it was over I felt elated, virtuous, and seraphic all at once.

"'I am going to tell you a story, Verna,' I began, and she must have noticed something odd about my voice, for she looked up quickly. 'You don't need to go to Wading City for that man.'

"Then I started in right from the beginning, and I told her the true story of what happened to Hugo Dalton, and how Joe Phelps had to make it happen to him. I didn't put any sniveling stuff into it, and there wasn't any pathos or plea for justification or anything else outside of a plain statement of unromantic facts.

"I watched her eyes grow large as I went along with my story, and I could see the blood come and go in her cheeks. She was sitting with her elbows on the pine table, her face resting in her upturned palms; and during the whole

thing she said not a word.

"When I finished up, I stood silent for a moment, and then I took the two guns out of my pocket, and laid them under her hands, after which I turned and walked over to my old place as living target, and stood there.

"'Go ahead,' I said, looking over toward the table, and pulling at my cigar, to indicate a state of mental nonchalance that I was two miles from feeling.

"I saw her pick up her gun and hold it uncertainly, and then I turned my head sideways and bade this world a hasty farewell. Nothing happened for a minute, so I looked at Verna again. The gun was still in her hand, but her arms were folded on the pine table, and her head was down on her arms, and her body was shaking.

"I threw the cigar away, and a minute later I was holding her in my arms and trying to make her stop crying; and all she said was just plain 'Joe' a

couple of dozen times.

"I stood this way, holding her, until the sobbing let up a bit, and then I kissed her without remonstrance or cease. Finally I said to her:

"'Why didn't you shoot?"

"'I couldn't—I couldn't,' she answered brokenly.

"'Because your hand was unsteady?"

L askeu.

"Verna nodded, and laid her head on my shoulder.

"'Were you afraid you'd cripple me? Were you afraid you'd fail to kill me with the first shot?"

"'No, Joe; that wasn't it. I was afraid I wouldn't hit the cigar ash."

Denver Joe climbed slowly down from the pine fence in front of Maloney's Café. The man in the blue overalls hurled the final cabbage into the Sante Fé freight car.

"So long, doc," Joe said. "I'm going

home to the wife.'







AM to be married to-morrow, and my friends call me a fool. There will be compensations, I think; but, according to the standard of worldly wisdom,

by which I judge others, my friends are right in their verdict upon my marriage. They are wrong in their verdict upon me. I committed a very human little folly; and the consequences grew beyond my control. A tiny seed may be-

come a big tree!

The little folly occurred three years ago. It was the sort of folly that might happen to any man. I kissed a prim, slim teashop waitress on the stairs. I had often teased her, and she was pinkpretty, and her waist got entangled in my arm as we passed. I don't know how I came to do it, for I entirely respected the girl.

It was a butterfly kiss, over in half a second. I did a deal of thinking in that short time. At the beginning of the kiss, I thought: "You're a fool. She's the wrong kind of girl." In the middle of the kiss, I thought: "She'll scream, and there will be a scene!" At the end of the kiss, all fear of scream or scene had passed. Two people had kissed.

She shrank back against the wall, looking pinker and prettier and more astonished at her own misdoing than displeased at mine.

"I didn't mean to!" she gasped; and

I entirely believed her.

"Neither did I," I declared; and her

mouth began to tremble. It struck me that the absence of intention only aggravated my offense in her eyes.

"Never mind, Marjorie!" I consoled her. "It was a very little one; and it wasn't your fault. I surprised it out of

you.

"I don't know what made me," she declared tearfully. She was rose-pink by then, and her eyes blinked.

"I know what made me," I said.

"Pretty girl!"

I was in danger of further folly; but she put out her hand to fend me off. "If you did," she cried, in a fierce little whisper, "I should hate you!"

I should probably have risked hatred, but for the tears in her pretty eyes. I saw clearly that she would feel insulted. She was many years younger than I,

and a very good girl, I was sure.
"I won't," I promised. "I beg your pardon, Marjorie. I am ashamed of myself, because"—I hesitated, but finally decided that I'd betrer cure any nonsense that my folly had put in her pretty little head—"because I am not free to kiss any one." Her eyes fell suddenly, and she shivered slightly. "Don't make too much of a little thing, my dear."

She looked up at me. She was pale-

pink now.

"It is not a little thing to me," she said. "It is the first time that—that—I thought people respected me. I—I thought I respected myself."

I saw that the worst trouble wasn't my kissing her, but her kissing me. I

could think of only one way of diminishing her self-condemnation. I took it. Perhaps that was another folly.

"In one way, Marjorie," I said very soberly, "it isn't a little thing to me. I have missed the best of life. Married and missed! It isn't very nice to grow old-thirty-six next week; quite an ancient person-and to feel that you've missed things; and nobody would miss you. I shall always like to remember that once a dear, little girl gave me a kiss. But I'm afraid you didn't give it. I cheated it out of you, and you didn't know what you were doing. Well, do the next nicest thing, Marjorie. Don't grudge it, and be friends."

I held out my hand. She put hers in it. I knew from the clutch of her fingers that the half-minute kiss had done a year's mischief; and my attempt at consolation had made the mischief worse. Marjorie had made up her foolish little mind that I was in love with her, and that she was in love with me.

I gave her small hand a friendly squeeze-I tried to make it merely friendly. Old Hughes came to the top of the stairs while I was holding her hand, glanced down, turned back. went upstairs hastily, and Marjorie ran downstairs.

"Friends," she whispered, as she went.

I repeated the word under my breath, and shook my head at myself as I entered the smoking room. A stray kiss is nothing; but "friends" may mean

a serious business.

That smoking room was an old haunt of mine, where I played chess and occasionally dominoes. Ten years before, when I was going up in the world. I had abandoned it as beneath my dignity. Seven years later, when I was a man of some note, I returned. My life had empty spaces to fill, and acquaintances of fifteen years' standing seemed the nearest approach to friends, though we never met outside a chess room.

I was accounted a very strong chess player, but I played badly that afternoon. Old Hughes, who was generally a spectator, sat and watched me in silence. He never liked me to lose.

"I am not myself this afternoon," I

"You are not yourself," he agreed. I knew he was not thinking of chess.

I tried dominoes, as requiring less of "myself," but I blocked my own suit and forgot my partner's. Old Hughes still looked on in distressed gloominess. I felt that he was disappointed in me. Somehow his disapproval worried me.

I liked him best of the queer habitués of the room. He was not a gentleman in the ordinary sense of the word, but he had all the virtues of a man. honored me with some regard, I think. He certainly had a strong fatherly regard for Marjorie. He owned a third share in the restaurant, and, without professing to take any part in its management, he kept an eye upon many things. In particular he was a sort of guardian to the waitresses.

"When a nice girl comes here," he had once told me, "I feel responsible that she leaves here a nice girl. They're young things, and they don't think. There are men about town who do!"

I was afraid that he took me for one of these men. I was sorry for that; sorry for the whole business; very sorry for Marjorie. She was safe enough from me, of course. I wasn't even in love with her; but, by Jove! I liked to remember the feel of her waist on my arm! I liked to remember the tone of her voice-she had a singularly nice voice-when she said "Friends!" liked the thought of a little flirtation with her. I didn't mean to do it-I'd have been an infernal scoundrel if I had!-but I caught myself thinking of it. Perhaps old Hughes was half right; but there was a decent half to me.

I took myself severely to task that evening. There should be no approach to flirtation, I vowed. I would even turn back to avoid passing her on the stairs. In the course of the next fortnight I turned back four times. The fifth time I went on. She stopped; but

she didn't turn back.

"Marjorie? Just one?" "No, no! Oh, no!"
"Witch!"

"Let me go! Please!"

I let her go unkissed. She went on. Then paused, and half turned to me. There's a limit to every man's good

resolutions. I passed mine.

"It's your own fault," I said, "Mariorie!"

"Yes," she gasped. "I know."

Honest little Marjorie!

I kissed her; and once more I saw old Hughes pass the top of the stairs. I didn't feel like facing him. I went down, and out. I called myself fool and rogue in turn. I sometimes wonder if I might have been a rogue, if Providence had not stepped in. I hope not a very great rogue.

It was old Hughes who played Providence. I went there two days later, and sat at a solitary table. He walked across the room, and sat down facing me. I saw that something was coming.

"It is hot," I remarked.
"It is hot," he agreed.

He pulled his long white beard, and looked at me thoughtfully. I offered him a cigar. He liked my cigars, but he shook his head.

"I am a little upset to-day," he remarked. "Marjorie has given notice. We have had many good girls here. She is the best."

He lit his pipe slowly.

"Yes," I agreed. "Yes." "I always look after our girls," he went on. "It worries me to think that perhaps where she is going --- She is an orphan. She cried when she told me

that she was going."
"I suppose," I remarked, "she is leav-

ing to better herself."

She is leaving-for her good." He looked me straight in the face. I looked straight at him. When I cannot meet a man's eyes fairly I shall

shoot myself.

"Perhaps," I said, "you could persuade her to change her mind. I should be sorry for her to leave, although it will make no difference to me. I shall not be here for a long time after today. You and I are old friends. Do you want anything plainer?"

We looked at each other again. "I suppose," he said slowly, "you are not in a position-or do not wish-

He paused. "I am exceeding my right in asking such a question."

"I am not in a position to court Marjorie," I told him. "I am married. We have been separated for some years, and she is abroad. Anyhow-no, I don't think I should court Marjorie.

She is a dear girl, but-

"Beneath you socially," he added. "It is a natural and proper feeling, of course. I know your position in the world. It would have been better if you had remembered it, perhaps?"

"Yes," I agreed. "Yes. Don't misjudge me. And above all don't misjudge Marjorie. There has been nothing but— Well, a couple of kisses snatched on the stairs. I took her by "And she likes you," he said grave-

"That is the child's excuse."

"Yes," I said. "Dash it all! You can't blame me more than I blame myself! Have one of my cigars, for a last

smoke together."

"Thank you. I've always liked you since you were a very young man. Many's the fine game I've watched you play. I shall miss you. You will be missed a deal here. People know who you are, though they don't say anything about it. They look upon your company as an honor. Mind, I don't say that I blame you. A pretty girl's a pretty girl, and a man is a man. wasn't always old. Now I am. I shall miss you."

"For a time," I said, "old friend. Pretty Marjorie will marry—bless her! -and I shall come back again. They

soon forget at twenty."

"Some people forget," he said, "and some don't. Well, well! I am at the Café de la Reine on Thursday evenings. I might see you there sometimes.

"Yes," I promised; "and if ever I can help Marjorie-without her knowledge, of course-you see, I'm a wellto-do man, with no calls upon me. It would salve my conscience—my apology for a conscience—if I could do something for her. Don't mistake me. There's nothing between us but what I told you. I only mean-suppose I put a trifle into the business? You might

be able to do a little more for a good waitress. She's an orphan, you say?"

"She'd never forgive me, if she knew," he said slowly. "The very last thing that she would wish would be

money from you."

"No doubt," I agreed, "but she needn't know. It would be a consolation to me to make her a bit more comfortable. I have a good bit of liking for her in a way. I'm lonely enough to appreciate being cared for. Do this

for me.'

"Well," he said slowly. "I can't take money for her. I'm not the kind of man to take a present from any one; but I've often thought that, if I had a little windfall to put in the business, I'd make an assistant manageress; and if I did, I should certainly choose Marjorie. She's young, but she is a class above the other girls. If an old customer whom I particularly respected were to say: 'I'm going away, and I'd like to invest a trifle in the concern.' Proper security and interest, you understand. Nothing to do with her."

'Quite so," I agreed; "quite so! I have had very pleasant times in this room, Mr. Hughes. Now that I am leaving for a long while, if you would let me put a hundred or so in the busi-

He scoffed at the idea of hundreds; but ultimately I succeeded in vesting a hundred at six per cent. I may add that I duly received the interest, and that he has twice offered to repay the principal, as the business has improved.

As soon as our arrangements were completed I left. I said a few words to Marjorie when I took my check.

"This is good-by, Marjorie," I told her. "I am going away for a long, long time. I hope you will feel able to stay, and-and God bless you, my dear. Come outside the door and shake hands."

She came outside. She gave me both her hands; and I kissed her. I do not reckon that for folly. It was inevi-

table.

"I wish things were different, little girl," I said, "and that I were free to be fond of you."

Perhaps I was wrong to say that, but it seemed so cruel to let her think that I did not care. Besides, I did.

"I am glad you wish that," she said, looking up in my eyes. "It will comfort me. God bless you. I wish it, too! Good-by."

I held her for a moment. Then I

went. My eves were wet.

"If I were free," I told myself, "I could very easily like that little girl."
Well, I wasn't free; and I had to

do something to fill up the empty space in my life that I had filled with chess. I took to politics. It is a harder game than chess, but less honest. The best

man is not so sure to win.

Politics took me into society, for I found that ministries were made there. I acquired some reputation as a debater, and the government were anxious to secure my services as a free lance. found a small foothold in political society. I met Lady Vera Towers there; a clever, handsome widow of thirtyodd; cynical and shrewd and calculating; ambitious and full of schemes, and perhaps a trifle unscrupulous to her enemies. To her friends I think she was loyal and sincere. I believe she reckoned me as a friend. Anyhow, we were of the same party, and she was helpful to me. She cured me of many social failings with a candor that was smiling

Among my failings she reckoned the absence of a wife, "who could give good

dinners."

"Dinners make ministers," she said. "You see one can tell the truth occasionally in private life."

I told her my matrimonial situation,

and she shook her head.

"You and I are severely handi-capped," she stated. "You can't marry at all, and I can't marry a fool."

"You would marry a wise man for

ambition?" I inquired.

"If I could stand the man," she owned candidly. "You see, I've nothing else to marry for. The heart was knocked out of me years ago; and I never had much.'

I am inclined to fancy that was true. Anyhow, there was no sentiment between her and me. But I think, when she heard of the death of my wife, she expected me to ask for her hand; and I think she was prepared to give it. I do not think that marriage would have damaged our friendship. We had a good deal in common, but she was a trifle harder than I; and cleverer, much cleverer.

It happened two years after my little folly. I was far away from England at the time, and it was a month before I reached home. I thought then that I should probably marry Lady Vera, and the afternoon after my return I called upon her. We talked politics for half an hour. When I was going, I said:

"I suppose you have heard?"

"Oh, yes," she answered calmly. "I could not offer sympathy; and the next best thing was silence. Well, now you can have your career."

"I sometimes wonder if I want a career," I said; and she laughed.

"There are other things, of course. 'To sport with Amaryllis in the shade, or with the tangles of Neæra's hair!"

"I am a little old for that," I remarked, with a touch of bitterness.

I wonder if she read anything in my voice. She was such a wonderfully clever woman. Anyhow, she glanced at me curiously.

"In my experience," she remarked, with a careless little laugh, " a man is never too old to be a fool. Well? Who is Neæra?"

"There is no Neæra," I declared.

Lady Vera shrugged.

"You mean you're not sure whether you'll smooth out the tangles?" she told me. "Or whether she'll let you?"

"I suspect that Neæra is married by now." I said.

"Then there is a Neæra?"

"There was a girl that I-you could hardly call it flirtation."

"And she called it-what?"

"I suppose she called it falling in love. I am not sure whether I ought to find out if she is free. She is a very good girl, but not—not in my own sphere."

Lady Vera shrugged herself again.

"Nobody," she said, "can advise you upon that sort of thing. It depends upon the value you set on a girl; and on a career. I'm not going to help you out. Go away, and don't come back till you've settled about Neera."

She looked at me as if she dared me. It was the first and only time that I regarded her as a woman rather than as

a "comrade."

"Suppose you were Neæra," I said suddenly.

She looked me straight in the face.

"I shouldn't want my hair messed about," she said. I don't know how to describe the way she said it; but I knew what she meant as clearly as if she had said: "I can't pretend to be in love. If you think of marrying me, please understand that!"

We looked at each other for a moment. Then she waved me to a chair.

"Sit down and tell me about it," she commanded, "since you want to."

I told her very briefly.

"It seems to me," I concluded, "that, before I am free to seek a career, I am bound to find out if she has stayed unmarried on my account."

"It is quixotic," Lady Vera said, "but I do not blame a man for being quixotic in a matter of honor. Do you want to find Neæra unmarried? And to marry her?"

"I don't think so," I said. And then I didn't. "You see, I have come to an age when one weighs up things—even love! So far as I am capable of love, I have a tender feeling for her."

"Then, either way, you will have compensations," Lady Vera consoled me, "I think—I really think I envy you the capacity for love. Mine has gone, but—I loved a man once. One only loves once, I believe. Do you know, I am inclined to think that your once is Neæra. If you can put her in competition with your position and prospects—and I know how much these are to you—when you haven't seen her for two years, that 'tender feeling' must be pretty strong."

"The question that I can't escape," I

said, "is her feeling."

"My dear fellow," said Lady Vera, "you would find ways of escape if you wanted to. You'd say: 'It was nothing, really, and of course she's forgotten about it.' You mayn't know it, but

you are in love with her."

I thought at the time that she was wrong about my loving Marjorie. Indeed, I was not sure that I had not fallen in love with her. She was such a great woman. I shall always think so. I wanted my career, wanted it badly; and I knew that I could have it with Lady Vera.

I went the next afternoon to the old smoking room. I met Marjorie coming down the old stairs. She had lost a deal of her pretty pinkness, and she looked slimmer and more fragile; a pale wisp of a woman, very dainty and refined. My arm seemed to quiver for her. Oh, yes! I was capable of love —for Marjorie!

She gave a little gasp when she saw me. I felt her eyes fixed upon my hat band. She caught feebly at the rail, and I supported her with my arm.

"You have waited for me, Marjorie?"
I asked. "My dear little Marjorie!"
She held to my coat, and dropped

her head on my shoulder.

When she raised it she was pinkpretty, as I remembered her. She tried to speak and could not; laughed softly from happiness, and put her head on

my shoulder again.

Certainly there are compensations for a career. If I could put the clock back two years and meet Marjorie on the stairs, I would sow the seed of my folly again! I stroked the head that lay upon my shoulder—Neæra's hair!



NOTHING NEW

THERE's nothing new beneath the sun"—
So doth the ancient proverb run.
No joke to crack that isn't old,
No tale to tell that isn't told,
No line to pen
That's not been done by other men.

No play to write that's left unwrit By some old-time dramatic wit; No thing to paint, no mood to limn, Remaining from the ages dim; No song to sing That did not in the old days ring.

Ah, well, perhaps the proverb's true,
And in this world there's nothing new;
Yet naught I care if it be so—
Some old things still retain their glow,
And I know well
One spot where still they weave their spell.

Two lips I know, not far away,
With blissful fruitage day by day,
And eyes that with their glances speed
Rare messages that I would heed.
All old, maybe,
But yet as good as new to me!
John Kendrick Bangs,





DOZEN plays and half a dozen musical pieces have been produced in New York since I last chronicled the events of the month. Of the

former, three at most merit prolonged description by reason of intrinsic merit or the fact that they promise to be more or less permanently enduring. Of the latter, two may be regarded as de-

cidedly successful.

But despite this unsatisfactory accounting of activity, the present season has been an unusual one as regards socalled successes. Of plays which have been indorsed by the press, and which have drawn at least fair audiences, more have been produced during the last three months than at any similar period in the memory of Broadway. For a time the succession of good plays Theaterwas good for everybody. going is a habit; bad plays keep people away from the theater, whereas good ones are an incentive to go repeatedly. But even in this city of enormous population, there may be too much of a good thing. There are undoubtedly too many theaters, and with too many good plays to draw from all must suffer more or less: Therefore, the general results from a financial point of view have been far from encouraging. On the road, with expenses considerably increased, the conditions have been even more unsatisfactory. So it happens that there are to-day in New York more disengaged actorsand actors of the better sort—than has ever been known before. A few nights ago these unemployed actors gave themselves a consolation dinner at the Lambs' Club, and the list of names of those present included some of the best-known and most talented players in the profession. All of which would seem to prove again the truth of that old adage that "All that glitters is not gold."

But away with melancholy. Let us come to more pleasant things. A very pleasant thing, indeed, is the Messrs. Ber and Guillémand's farce, "The Million," which came into the Thirty-ninth Street Theater to cheer an unexpectant first-night audience, which at the outset was prepared for the worst. For "The Million" had had a preliminary hearing elsewhere, and gossip said that it was a fine example of what is set down in the vernacular as a first-class "lemon." Probably, then, no one was more surprised than the producers themselves when this merry little piece sent the first nighters into paroxysms of laughter, and had them literally rolling in their chairs.

One of the results is due, perhaps, to the fact that it is a clean French farce. There are no masquerading Lotharios, no flirtatious husbands, no faithless wives. There is nothing, in fact, of the familiar French farce about it. It is just clean, and wholesome, and funny. And it is capitally acted.

In "The Million" you are introduced

at the outset to three young strugglersan artist, a reporter, and an embryonic doctor-living together in a studio, and finding it difficult to make ends meet. One of them, the artist, owns a ticket in a South American lottery, but he does not set much store by this possession. The ticket is good for a million dollars -if it wins. But do such things ever win? Well, this one does, but not until it has been taken from the studio by an escaping burglar, who has borrowed the blouse containing it, to help disguise himself from the pursuing police. The burglar doesn't know anything about the lottery ticket, neither does the young artist's sweetheart, who, in a moment of pity, decks out the escaping one in the concealing blouse.

The point of greatest laughter in the first act comes when the returning artist and his friends learn that the ticket has won the prize. The one remaining dollar in their clothes is immediately used to light a cigarette, and, then, in a pandemonium of joyous excitement, the boys proceed to wreck the studio, smashing tables, chairs, dishes, ornaments—everything, in fact, that

they can lay their hands on.

When the place looks like the pictures one sees of a cyclone's devastation, some one mentions the lottery ticket, and asks where it is. The artist casually remarks that it is in his blouse, and goes to get it. He cannot find the garment, and a moment later the girl confesses that she has given it away. Blank despair now where only joy has reigned before. And, of course, a wild chase for the missing blouse, and incidentally the winning ticket, through the next two acts.

The first part of the farce is decidedly the best, but there is fun in plenty in the other scenes. In the second act much of the humor comes from the presence of a cheap opera tenor—the Caruso of the Bowery—who is forever trying his voice, and who breaks into song at every opportunity. And there is a drunken scene in the final act, played by Taylor Holmes, as the medical student, which is indescribably amusing. Indeed, much of the suc-

cess of the farce is due to the clever acting of this young man, though he is called on to share the applause with Paul Ker, as the tenor, and William Burress, as the burglar, both of whom give amazingly clever performances of

their unusually funny rôles.

"The Price," a second play by George Broadhurst to be seen in New York this season, was generally scored by the reviewers of the daily papers, though I must confess I could not exactly understand their attitude. The subject is not pleasing, to be sure, and the problem is not new, but it is an exceptionally well-made play, and one in which the writing and manipulation are far more skillful and legitimate than anything Mr. Broadhurst has previously produced. The acting, moreover, is surprisingly good, with Miss Helen Ware playing the leading figure splendidly.

Retributive justice in the person of an outraged wife forms the pivot about which swing the play's highly moving incidents. Again an artist is a central figure, this one, Stannard Dole, being a highly temperamental person, who for a time had lost his skill, only to find it again in the inspiring presence of his secretary, Ethel Toscanini, a fine-looking, full-blooded young woman, contrasting in all ways with the artist's wife. In fact, Mrs. Dole is slovenly as to person, and prematurely old. She prides herself on her housekeeping, and makes a virtue of the fact that she has always attended scrupulously to her husband's material needs. On his part, he claims that something more was necessary, and in a splendid speech he defends his love of beauty, and deplores his wife's unwillingness to meet his spiritual requirements. All that she lacks, Ethel Toscanini has, but though the wife suspects, she has no proof.

And now it develops that the artist is very ill, that any shock may kill him. The shock comes when Ethel Toscanini, realizing that she loves another man, repulses Stannard Dole, and frankly admits that she has never really cared for him. The artist falls dead. When the curtain rises again,

Ethel is married to Doctor Bristol, and the pair are living happily together. In the household is a young girl, a friend of both husband and wife, and presently the artist's widow, Mrs. Dole, arrives to become the housekeeper.

The young wife scents trouble, and would avoid engaging the woman, but the doctor is insistent, believing that it will be an act of charity to give Mrs. Dole a home. He thus unconsciously provides the means to the undoing of his own happiness. For Mrs. Dole has never forgotten, and she is not ready to forgive. Now, more than ever, she is full of thoughts of vengeance, especially as she has found a diary of the artist's, in which his interest in Ethel Toscanini has been hinted at. Through a combination of circumstances, very plausibly contrived, Mrs. Dole arouses Ethel's jealousy, and then, when husband and wife are at odds, produces the diary, and reads from it what purports to be a confession by the artist of his relations with the secretary. At this point the poor woman finally confesses, there is a bitter scene between husband and wife, and he leaves her. It is only when he has gone that she learns that Mrs. Dole has tricked the confession from her. For the diary contains no such passage as alleged.

The play is powerful, and the interest is cumulative, the characterization is splendid, and the suspense acute. It is gloomy, of course. Miss Ware long since demonstrated her fitness for rôles of an emotional sort, and here she runs a gamut of intense expression with sincerity, strength, and conviction. In one scene she sings a little song, revealing an unusually pure and welltrained voice, and the exhibit calls attention to the fact that this actress at one time contemplated a lyric rather than a dramatic career. Jessie Ralph is the vengeful wife, and provides a magnificent performance of a malevolent type, while the excellent acting of Warner Oland, Harrison Hunter, and Margaret McWade contributes to the general quality of the performance. 'The Price" was produced at the Hud-

son Theater.

It has been such a long time since New York had a war melodrama that any estimate of "The Littlest Rebel's" prolonged popularity, based on firstnight enthusiasm, is impossible. Certainly the audience at the Liberty Theater "whooped it up," as the saying goes, but the personal popularity of the leading actors had a good deal to do

with that result.

Of these players, Mr. Dustin Farnum, one of the most ingratiating personalities on our stage, and a really clever actor, is better known to metropolitan theatergoers than his brother, William Farnum, who is, however, an excellent performer in romantic rôles. Here the two brothers stand opposed to each other as Yankee and Southern soldiers in the play which Mr. Edward Peble has elaborated from a one-act sketch first seen at a Metropolitan House Benefit performance, and subsequently in the vaudeville theaters. Then, as now, no little of the success of the piece was due, also, to the remarkable acting of little Juliet Shelby, who, though still a child, has command of all the emotional tricks of the theater.

In the play, Juliet Shelby appears as Virgie, the little daughter of Captain Herbert Cary (William Farnum), of the Confederate army. He is away at the war, and the child with her mother (Percy Haswell), and one or two loyal slaves, is living in the family homestead a few miles below Richmond, on the James River. Federal soldiers arrive, and the woman and child are kindly treated by their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Morrison (Dustin Farnum). A drunken soldier sets fire to the Cary mansion, and is shot dead by Colonel Morrison, who must presently ride away to pursue a Confederate scout, the latter, as may be guessed, being no other than Herbert

The second act formed the original playlet, and it is undoubtedly the best part of the longer work. It shows a room in an overseer's cabin where, early in the morning, little Virgie has taken refuge with her battered dolly.

Cary.

The child's mother has died in the meantime, and her father is off somewhere on scouting duty. The Union forces have cut off all supplies, and the child has been living on berries and coffee made from acorns. One gets a fine sense of the cruelty of war from this scene, and its bitterness for noncombatants, even to the innocent children.

Presently Cary arrives wounded; there is a beautiful scene between him and his little girl, but they are interrupted by the sound of hoofbeats in the distance. The child has never told a lie, but Cary, now fearing pursuit and capture, tells I'irgie that for once she must tell an untruth. To the Southern child General Lee's is a name held in reverence. "Would he want me to?" she asks, and, being assured that he would, prepares to hold her own and her father's secret when the enemy arrives.

Cary hides in the loft. Now comes Lieutenant Morrison and a detail of men, and there are some charming exchanges between him and the little girl, who almost succeeds in convincing him that he is on a false scent. At a crucial moment, however, he discovers that the scout is hidden in the loft, and

orders him down.

The scene that follows is genuinely affecting, and it is a relief to pent-up feelings when Morrison provides a pass for the wounded scout and his daughter through the lines to Richmond. In thus aiding the enemy, the gallant Union soldier lays himself open to arrest and court-martial, but it need hardly be added that before the final

curtain falls he is acquitted.

As far as playwright and actors can give plausibility to such a tale, "The Littlest Rebel" holds illusion. It is picturesquely staged, there is an exciting battle scene to close one act, and there is some very human and moving acting by the principals. In the cast, besides the two Farnums and Miss Shelby, are William B. Mack, Miss Haswell, and George Thatcher, each of whom contributes an admirable figure in the action.

Two musical pieces that give promise of more than ordinary success are "The Ouaker Girl" and "The Red Widow," the first an English work almost in its entirety, and the latter of native origin. For "The Quaker Girl" the book was written by James Tanner, with lyrics by Adrian Ross and The music, with Percy Greenbank. the exception of two delightful songs by Clifton Crawford, is by Lionel Monckton, who has never provided a

more insinuating score.

The scene of the first act is a delightful English village street, with the tiled cottages, the inn, the leafy background, bathed in sunshine. Trim lads and lassies, some in Quaker garb, others in bright raiment, people the scene, and provide a background for the story of the little Ouaker girl, who is presently to meet a young American, to fall in love with, and marry him in the end. The earlier music reflects the contrasting points of view of the soberly brought up girl, and the free-andeasy youngster from abroad, a particularly delightful number, "The Bad Boy and the Good Girl" being the especial means for introducing the two to each other's respective qualities.

Also in this village is an exiled French princess, who has come away from her own land to escape a "hateful marriage," and who, in the meantime, has found an affinity more to her liking in an English gentleman. The serious moment of this story comes at a point where the little Quaker girl, to save the princess, accepts the attentions of a designing prince, and is cast off for her pains by the American lover, who subsequently declares that he "ought to be Having reached this amiable conclusion, the way to happiness for him and the little Quaker girl is not far

off, you may be sure.

Besides providing good opportunities for that very versatile and delightful performer, Mr. Clifton Crawford, this musical piece has been the means of adding Miss Ina Claire to the list of American actresses available for ingénue singing rôles. Miss Claire is a find, quite the daintiest and most

charming person that musical comedy has disclosed in several seasons, and certain to take her place as a great favorite with the general public.

"The Quaker Girl" has brought success to the Park Theater, formerly the Majestic, which has had a more or less checkered career since the days when it housed "The Babes in Toyland" and

"The Wizard of Oz."

Rennold Wolf and Channing Pollock wrote the book of "The Red Widow," for which the music was provided by Charles J. Gebest. And for once it is possible to refer to a musical comedy book which is amusing in itself. Here, moreover, there is the advantage which comes from a real comedian, the star on this occasion being that very humorous person, Mr. Raymond Hitchcock, who appears as one Cicero Hannibal Butts, a corset manufacturer from Yonkers, who meets the red widow in London. She needs a passport for St. Petersburg, whither she is bound with the avowed purpose of "blowing up the czar." And she presents the matter in such a satisfying light to Cicero Hannibal Butts that he consents to accompany her, though he at first protests that "the game is not worth the scandal."

Once arrived at St. Petersburg, the corset manufacturer discovers for the first time that he is traveling with a dangerous woman, and ere long he is in the midst of complications from which he is extricated only after con-

siderable difficulty.

Needless to say, with Mr. Hitchcock in the rôle of Butts, the circumstances never become unduly tragic. But the authors have been more than usually sincere and successful in providing legitimate situations rather than those depending upon song and dance and the familiar Broadway devices in plays of this sort.

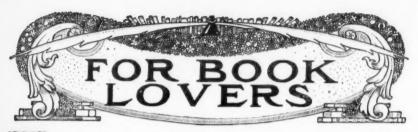
The music of "The Red Widow" is of a kind that promises immediate popularity. In the general performance, Sophie Barnard pleases as the red widow, and there is some excellent dancing by Gertrude Vanderbilt. As always, however, Mr. Hitchcock himself is the life of the party. "The Red Widow" is seen at the Astor Theater.

The Drama Players, an organization endowed by private capitalists in Chicago, have been giving a few performances at the Lyric Theater, where, however, their efforts have met with little substantial recognition. Appearing first in Ibsen's "The Lady from the Sea," neither their performance nor the general character of the work was such as to justify much enthusiasm. Subsequently in Molière's "The Learned Ladies" they provided a more enjoyable bill, and one in which the members of the company appeared to better advantage.

That very excellent young actor, Mr. John Barrymore, with Mr. Thomas Wise as his companion star, has been wasting valuable time on a nonsensical hodgepodge, "Uncle Sam," written by Anne Caldwell and James O'Dea. The play, in which both of these actors assume feminine characteristics, would be offensive but the fact that neither of them makes the transition with great skill. the cast of the piece which was originally offered at the Liberty Theater, Miss Katherine Blythe, in private life Mrs. John Barrymore, made an agreeable début, playing a small part neatly. The leading feminine rôle was skillfully and prettily handled by Miss Marjorie Wood.

Among the other plays which have lingered for a brief spell, but which have ultimately proved ungrateful to the metropolis, were "The Cave Man," by Gellett Burgess, which contained an amusing idea, not very well handled; "Mrs. Avery," by Gretchen Dale and Howard Estabrooke, which died quickly; "The Three Lights," by May Robson and Charles T. Dazey, which gave Miss Robson a chance for eccentric characterization, but which was on the whole rather childish entertainment; and "The Wife Decides," a comedy drama, so called, by Thomas McKeon, which aroused laughter at points where

tears were expected.





Y "The Fruit of the Vine," published by Frederick A. Stokes Company, Robert Hichens has added another to the long list of novels dealing

with Roman life. But Mr. Hichens has, as usual, created an atmosphere in which his characters live, so subtly interwoven with the incidents and events of the plot that it often seems to have caused them.

The principal characters are Sir Theodore Cannyngs, a retired English diplomat and his wife, Dolores, who have taken up their residence in Rome; Lady Sarah Ide, and Cæsare Carelli.

The story is largely one of emotion and characterization. Its theme is the vital lack in the lives of the Cannyngs, who, though married ten years, are childless. Sir Theodore diverts his thwarted desire for fatherhood to devotion to ten children of his friends, the Drugils; his wife, sensitive, wistful, fanciful, consoles herself with the diversions supplied by Lady Sarah.

Cæsare Carelli becomes her lover. This phase of the story is treated with such delicacy and human tenderness as to elevate it to the plane of romance. The whole movement of the story from the time when Dolores listens to her husband's outbreak regarding a childless home till the hour when Cæsare Carelli's child is born to her is full of dramatic vigor, and yet it is handled with such art that the reader cannot but feel throughout the haunting sadness of regrets, of human emotion, lost opportunities, and ruined lives that is like the spirit of Rome itself. In this book Mr. Hichens again demonstrates that he loves his craft, for he shows no signs of careless workmanship,

"The Confessions of Artemas Quibble," by Arthur Train, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, is the interesting but rather unpleasant story of a shady practitioner in the New York criminal courts.

The tale begins in the early child-hood of Quibble, is told in the first person, and carries him on until his numerous iniquities land him in Sing

In his indictment of him and his partner, the district attorney says: "These men have made a fat living for nearly a generation by blackmail, bribery, and perjury." Just how this fat living is made Mr. Train sets himself the task of describing.

The book can hardly be regarded as a single consecutive story; it is rather the narration of a series of disreputable artifices and tricks practiced upon Quibble's many victims. Most of these incidents have a foundation of fact, and deal with the familiar methods of the shyster lawver.

Mr. Train has set his clock back a little, and has chosen to present his story as taking place in a period prior to the present.

The book as a whole is forcible and ingenious, and is written in Mr. Train's pungent and rather cynical style.



Joseph C. Lincoln is one of the few authors who invariably make their readers feel that their last book is the best, which is but another way of saying that they are all worth while. So it is with "Cap'n Warren's Wards," published by D. Appleton & Co., and Cap'n Warren is one of the most excellent portraits in Mr. Lincoln's large

gallery.

The story of the wards, a boy and girl not yet of age, is interesting, even absorbing of itself. They have been reared in the most extravagant American fashion, filled with all manner of false and foolish ideas, and their horror at discovering that their father has left them in the care of this uncouth old sea captain is graphically described.

As Cap'n Warren shrewdly suspects, his brother, who was a great Wall Street magnate, had very good reasons for his selection of a guardian for his children, as the old sea captain can legally claim the fortune bequeathed to the children. This the captain does for the good of their souls and to discipline them in some ideas of common sense.

It is an original and carefully-thought-out plot dealing with one of those business complications which are so popular in native fiction just now, but in the last analysis the real interest in the story lies in the masterly characterization of Cap'n Warren. He fills the book, and the richness of his humor, the shrewdness of his insight, and the quaint flavor of his sane and homely philosophy make the book delightful reading.

In his foreword to his new book, "Four Months Afoot in Spain," published by the Century Company, Harry A. Franck piques the interest of his readers by informing them that he covered a thousand miles on the Iberian peninsula on foot and twice that distance by rail, third class, and then asks: "How can a man make such a journey on one hundred and seventy-two dollars?" Even if the narrative were less interesting than it is, one would keep on reading to discover the answer to the question.

One reads but a little way, however, before losing his curiosity about either question or answer. Mr. Franck is incapable of a single dry statement of geographical fact or customary guidebook information. Instead, he gives us life as it is lived in a land in which,

he assures us, "one may seek in vain for that strained, devil-chased air so stamped on our national physiognomy."

Mr. Franck is an impressionist. He sketches a picture, a rapid, racy picture full of the atmosphere of the locality and the life of its inhabitants. His touch-and-go phrasing and manner of hitting off the individuals with whom he comes in contact are inimitable, and often extremely humorous. Likewise he has the courage of his convictions, and when the occasion demands does not mince his words.

His new book suffers nothing in comparison with its predecessor, "A Vagabond Journey Around the World." It is quite as interesting and informing.

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The Bobbs-Merrill Company has published a new story by Wells Hastings, which the author calls "The Man

in the Brown Derby."

Why the book should not have been entitled "The Man in the Green Alpine" or "The Man in the Yellow Stetson," or the man in any other style of headgear, does not seem entirely obvious, for a derby of any shade has absolutely nothing to do with the tale. More or less importance is supposed to be attached to the selection of titles for novels—especially for "best sellers"—but in this case it seems to have been disregarded, unless length is considered essential.

As for the story itself, it is the old, old thing in adventure tales. The author evidently intended his hero to be one of the red-blooded type, but he has not succeeded in giving him any mark to distinguish him from the rest of the tribe except a pair of repulsively birthmarked scarlet hands. Of course, there are the sweet, persecuted heroine and a collection of stock situations, weather-beaten and more or less decayed.

There is no real reason why the whole plot should not have been cleared up in seventy pages instead of carrying the reader through over three hundred.

The manner of telling is interesting; that is its saving grace.

"Desmond Rourke, Irishman," by John Haslette, published by D. Appleton & Co., is a clever and interesting

story with an unusual setting.

The scene of the tale is laid in Santota, and deals with a group of adventurers, all of whom are pitting their crafty and uncommonly quick wits each against the other. There is the hero. Desmond Rourke, a typical, resourceful, witty Irishman; the villain, Johnny Courvois, a smooth and subtle French innkeeper; and Smith, a rather exaggerated type of the American millionaire

The plot is built up around a hypothetical silver mine which Rourke promotes with infinite nerve and ability sufficient to excite the cupidity of the

wariest investor.

There are some strong and even sinister scenes in the book, especially where Courvois meets his Nemesis, and is shot by the woman he has wronged in the haunted mountain pass.

The love interest is supplied by the Irishman naturally, and the innkeep-

er's supposed daughter.



Rex Beach's new book, "The Ne'erdo-well," published by Harper & Brothers, is a story that has been told before not only by Mr. Beach, but by other authors of adventure fiction. Its frequent appearance in the past, however, probably will not affect its possibilities as a best seller.

Few people who read fiction are unacquainted with the rich man's son whose career in college has been the despair of his father, and who, having in one way or another succeeded in getting his degree, seems bent upon wast-

ing the rest of his life.

Invariably the young man commits some enormity which forces him to leave New York and begin again on a ranch, or a gold mine, or in Alaska. It makes little difference where he goes so long as he finds "primitive" conditions and is forced to test his education as a football captain.

Mr. Beach's hero, Kirk Anthony, be-

longs to this familiar type. In the course of the celebration along Broadway of a football victory, he becomes involved in a fracas in which some one is believed to be killed, and he is drugged and put aboard a steamer

bound for Panama.

A highly improbable combination of circumstances makes it impossible for him to return to New York, and he is obliged to go to work as a brakeman on the railroad. This necessity, of course, brings out hitherto unsuspected strength of character, and by the time the story ends, young Anthony seems certain to be a worthy successor to his paternal railroad magnate.

Of course, there is the romantic heroine-Gertrude Garavel is her rather unusual alias, and she is half Spanish, half American—whose qualities of mind and heart are guaranteed to reform any

The plot, incidents, and characters are those that have been made familiar by long use.

Important New Books.

"The Silent Barrier," Louis Tracy, E. J. Clode.

"The Case of Richard Meynell," Mrs. Humphry Ward, Doubleday, Page & Co.

"Peter and Wendy," J. M. Barrie, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Francesca," Florence Morse Kingsley, Richard Badger. "Franz Liszt." James Huneker, Charles

Scribner's Sons.

"The Bauble," Richard Barry, Moffat, Yard

"A Likely Story." William De Morgan, Henry Holt & Co.

'Philip Steele," James Oliver Curwood, Bobbs-Merrill Co.

"My Ragpicker," Mary E. Walker, Little, Brown & Co.

"A Weaver of Dreams." Myrtle Reed, G. P. Putnam's Sons.

"Under Western Eyes." Joseph Conrad, Harper & Bros "Mothers to Men," Zona Gale, Macmillan

Co. "A Venture in Identity," Lucille C. Hough-

ton, Doubleday, Page & Co.
"The Moon Lady," Helen Huntington,
Charles Scribner's Sons.

"The Garden of Resurrection," Temple Thurston, Mitchell Kennerley.

Talks With Ainslee's Readers

THE most beautiful gown in the world might not look well upon the most beautiful woman in the world. It might be unsuited to her. Everybody understands that. But a surprising number of people seem to be unable to understand that it is just as important that the contents of a magazine should be suited to the character of that magazine. The greatest piece of literature in the world might be unsuited to one of the best magazines in the world. These reflections were started by a note we have just received from a poet for whose Pegasus we could not find stable room.

"You tell me," he writes, "that my poem is 'not just suited to Ainslee's present requirements." I know that you print much that has far less merit. I firmly believe that if Shakespeare was writing to-day you would find his contributions unavailable."

We are inclined to agree with this latter charge. Moreover, we wouldn't think of running Milton's "Paradise Lost" as a serial, and we doubt very much whether we'd consider it worth while suggesting to John Bunyan that he condense his "Pilgrim's Progress" to novelette length. Mighty fine things, both of them—we "print much that has far less merit"—but "not just suited to AINSLEE's present requirements." These are extreme cases, but the principle is the same in less evident cases.

THE work of certain authors is better fitted to certain magazines than to others. If we were asked what writer of novels best fulfilled AINSLEE's ideals, one of the first that would come to mind would be Marie Van Vorst. "Coral Strands," "A Belated Harvest," "A Man Called Collings," all have possessed the color, strength, and action distinctive of the ideal AINSLEE story. It is with this in mind that we say that we consider "The Broken Bell," next month's complete novel, the most brilliant piece of literature that Miss Van Vorst has yet given us.

The scene is laid in Italy. The heroine is the beautiful American wife of an Italian nobleman. So much is commonplace. But the development of its dramatic plot, the insight and sympathy with which the story is written, the charm of its delicate symbolism—"The Broken Bell" is brilliant, and it is literature.

THE short stories in this coming number do not suffer by comparison with the novelette. In the first place, Marion Hill contributes one of them. Let us hope for the peace of his last moments that the man who said "Women have no sense of humor" passed away before reading anything by Marion Hill. Ever since "Georgette" and "At Outs and Ins with Dallie," you have been asking us for more. This next one couldn't very well be "more," but it is at least every bit as much. "At a Mile a Minute" is the name of it.

Then there will be the Margaretta Tuttle story, "The Greater Need." In this little romance of Saranac, with its lights and shades sharply drawn, we again meet our old friend the archdeacon. Gerald Villiers-Stuart, author of the novelette in this number, contributes "The Jester," a tale at once strong and sprightly.

OUR good fortune in discovering new writers has not blinded us to the merits of writers who have been brought to light by other magazines. Wells Hastings is really too entertaining a story-maker never to have been in AINSLEE'S. This is to be remedied in our March number with a most unusual and fascinating bit of fiction called "Beauty."

Another writer new to AINSLEE'S is Thomas P. Byron, who has been attracting considerable attention, ours among other people's, since the publication of "The Star of the O'Donaju's" in one of our contemporation.

raries a couple of years ago. His story for the March number, "Aladdin of the Rio Bravo," is the romance of one of Mr. Byron's characteristic dare-devil Mexican adventurers, who speak their Spanish with just the ghost of a brogue.

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THE shoe-hombre, or the man who wears shoes, is a sort of combination town bully, loafer, and Beau Brummel found in Philippine villages. His loud dress—the mere fact that he wears shoes is an evidence of his foppishness—his glib tongue, his swagger, and his contempt for honest labor all go to make him a person of much influence among the superstitious natives. Naturally he hates Americans and the education and enlightenment with which they threaten his power. The trouble bred by one shoe-hombre is the subject of the next story in Nalbro Bartley's stirring Philippine series.

Samuel Gordon has never written a more colorful or more dramatic story than "Stars in Their Courses." F. Berkeley Smith's "A Man of Confidence," also in the March number, is a humorous little tale told with all this author's characteristic distinction. "The Prospect Hole" is a Western yarn by George Hyde Preston. Frank Condon has labeled his next written bit of human nature "Love and the Law." "The Letters She Burned." by Grace Van Braam Gray, is like a delicious breath of spring blown into winter by some mischievous March wind.

THE stage story for March is by Virginia Kline, herself a talented player. "The Man Who Would Be Obeyed," which might well have for a sub-title "The Woman Who Could Not Obey," seems to us to portray most convincingly one of the greatest theatrical managers this country ever produced. Perhaps we are wrong. Perhaps Miss Kline had no one in mind: or, possibly, the man who would be obeyed is a composite portrait of several American managers. This much we do know: since we first began printing these stories of the stage-and there have been some mighty good ones among themwe have never given you one with more power and charm and pathos than this coming one.

While we are speaking of the stage, it is gratifying to us to note the number of AINS-LEE stories that have successfully withstood the test of dramatization. It takes a good story to make a good play. Aside from the novelettes that have been dramatized, our short stories have furnished material for a number of little one-act pieces that make leading attractions on the higher class vaudeville circuits. Among others, "St. Anthony's Vision," Thomas Addison's first story, has been elaborately staged under the title of "The Girl Who Dropped In"; Holman Day's "Via Palmyra Stage," printed in AINSLEE's several years ago, is still drawing good houses, while Kate Jordan's delightful story, "The Voice in the Silence," has made a most encouraging start in a dramatic version by the author called "The Right Road."



"Wife, is this Coffee or Postum?"

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Then one knows real good Postum.

It is easy to make it right—simply boil it 15 to 20 minutes after boiling begins.

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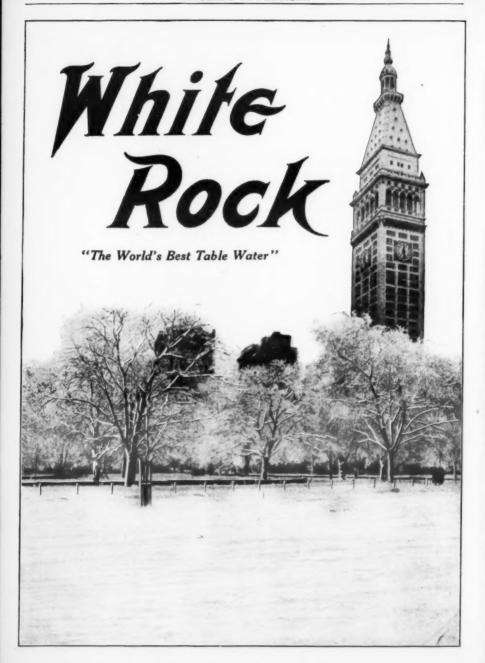
the change from coffee is easy and pleasant, and coffee aches and ills may be expected to disappear.

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Mothers of the last generation, sitting at their drafty fire-places, dreamed of better things to come for their grand-daughters. They knew much was lacking in home-warming devices, and that improvements would come. And in the fulness of time their visions have taken form in



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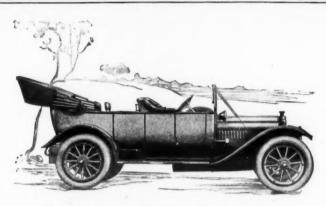


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ERHAPS you are among the hundreds of automobile enthusiasts—owners, drivers or just "lookers on"—who have wondered what The White Company would do were it to produce a six-cylinder car. Probably you've come to have a splendid respect for any car The White Company might produce as you have watched their models year after year since the automobile industry began. Perhaps you are prejudiced, but it's such a splendid prejudice, reaching back over years of actual performance, during which the name of "White" stood as a bulwark years of actual performance, during which the finite of white stood as a briwark for reliability and thorough building. If you had this curiosity, to-day we are ready to satisfy it—in a six-cylinder "White."

It's hardly necessary to tell you the details of this car. The highest engineer-

ing authorities in the gasoline-engine world have reached very definite conclusions, and any car designed to-day would imitate closely the mechanical features of this six-cylinder "White."

The Simplest "Six"—The White

F course we take considerable pride in telling you that it's built on the same identical lines as our "30's" and "40's"—it has the same marvelous simplicity which tells more than any word description of ours—that practically total absence of the paraphernalia that litter most engines, especially the more powerful types. Regarding the details of finish, body lines and equipment, The White Company would not be outdone. This six-cylinder "60" White is all a car should be in these respects—possibly just a little more—because it has the advantage of being produced to-day instead of yesterday. Built as we like to build motor cars, there is only a limited number of these cars to be produced this season. They're going pretty rapidly, order after order having been filled without even a photograph, a blue-print or a car to show. This isn't a cry of "wolf" but just a plain statement to our friends-to those who want this highest expression of an automobile as interpreted by the great White factory. We would not disappoint you if we could help it—you can help it by getting your appointment for a demonstration early.

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My Farewell Car

By R. E. Olds, Designer

Reo the Fifth—the car I now bring out—is regarded by me as close to finality. Embodied here are the final results of my 25 years of experience. I do not believe that a car materially better will ever be built. In any event, this car marks my limit. So I've called it My Farewell Car.

My 24th Model

This is the twenty-fourth model which I have created in the past 25 years.

They have run from one to six cylinders—from 6 to 60 horsepower. From the primitive cars of the early days to the most luxurious modern machines.

I have run the whole gamut of automobile experience. I have learned the right and the wrong from tens of thousands of users.

In this Farewell car I adopt the size which has come to be standard—the 30 to 35 horsepower, 4-cylinder car.

Where It Excels

The best I have learned in

25 years is the folly of taking chances. So the chiefest point where this car excels is in excess of care and caution.

In every steel part I use the best alloy ever proved out for the purpose. And all my steel is analyzed, to prove its accord with the formula.

I test my gears with a crushing machine—not a hammer. Thus I know to exactness what each gear will stand.

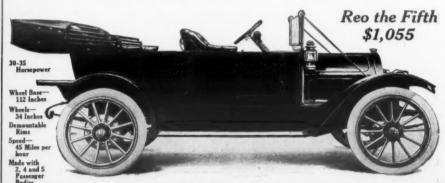
I put the magneto to a radical test. The carburetor is doubly heated, for low-grade gasoline.

I use Nickel Steel axles of unusual size, with Timken roller bearings. I use Vanadium Steel connections. So in every part. Each device and material is the best known for the purpose. The margin of safety is always extreme.

In Finish, Too

I have also learned that people like stunning appearance. So my body finish consists of 17 coats. The upholstering is deep, and of hairfilled, genuine leather. The lamps are enameled, as per the latest vogue. Even the engine is nickel-trimmed.

The wheel base is long—the tonueau is roomy—the wheels are large—the car is over-tired. In every part of the car you'll find the best that is possible—and more than you expect.



Top and windshield not included in price. We equip this car with mohair top, side curtains and slip cover, windshield, gas tank and speedometer—all for \$100 extra. Solf-startor, if wanted, \$25 extra.

Initial Price, \$1,055

This car—my finest creation—has been priced for the present at \$1,055. This final and radical paring of cost will stand, I believe, as my greatest achievement.

It has required years of preparation. It has compelled the invention of much automatic machinery. It necessitates making every part in our factory, so no profits go to parts makers.

It requires enormous production, small overhead expense, small selling expense, small profit. It means a standardized car for years to come, with no changes in tools and machinery.

It requires, in addition, that we make only one chassis. By that we save nearly \$200 per car.

Thus Reo the Fifth gives you more for the money than any other car in existence. Any

man can prove that for himself.

But this price is not fixed. It is the uttermost minimum. We shall keep it this low just as long as is possible. But if materials a d v a n c e — even slightly—our price must also advance.

No price can be fixed for six months in advance without leaving big margin, and we haven't done that. So the present price is not guaranteed.

No Skimping

Men who know me won't think that in fixing this price I have skimped on this Reo the Fifth. Others should consider what I have at stake—my 25 years of prestige.

If there is one device, one feature, one material better than I here employ I don't know it. Better workmanship I regard as impossible. More care and caution cannot be conceived.

I ran one of these cars for ten thousand miles—night and day, at full speed, on rough roads. And the vital parts hardly showed the least sign of wear.

Catalog Ready

Our catalog tells all the materials, gives all specifications. With these facts before you, you can make accurate comparisons with any car you wish.

· We ask you to do that. In buying a car for years to come, make sure of the utmost value. Here is the best car I can build after 25 years of experience. You ought to find it out.

The book also shows the various styles of bodies. With two-passenger Roadster body the price is \$1,000.

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Canadian Factory, St. Catharines, Ont.

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Note this new feature—the center, cane-handle control. This handle moves but three inches in each of four directions. That very slight motion does all of the gear-shifting.

Note the absence of levers. The driver's way is as clear, on either side, as the entrance to the tonneau. Both brakes are operated by foot pedals, One pedal also operates the clutch. The driver sits as he should sit, on the left-hand side. Heretofore this was possible only with electrics.

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The mileage credited each car was made by a regular stock-model Winton Six in the individual service of the owner, between the following dates, and was registered by odometer:

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TOTAL REPAIR EXPENSE

The repair expense charged against each car is sworn to by the owner as "the

total cost of repairs on said automobile between said dates (exclusive of tire repairs)."

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Each mileage and expense report was passed upon and accepted by a Committee of Judges having no connection with the Winton Company. These Judges exercised their own judgment without restriction, and have themselves sworn to their annual decisions.

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Every possible precaution has been taken to render these reports free from error, in order that automobile buyers might have for their consideration an absolutely reliable set of figures showing the actual cost of keeping a high-grade car in operation after purchase.

THIS IS THE ACID TEST

R EPAIR expense is the acid test of a car's merit.

Low repair expense means vastly more than money saved.

When repairs become necessary, expense is *only part* of the owner's loss.

For, every time a repair is needed, the car owner loses some of his respect for his car, some of his pride in its ownership, and some of his faith in its merit.

Furthermore, every time a car goes into the repair shop, the owner suffers the loss of its use.

So that, financially and otherwise, the man whose car is undergoing repairs is, temporarily at least, worse off than the man who has no car at all.

UTILITY OR EXPENSE?

The motor car is a utility, pure and simple.

Its only value is in its ability to carry its passengers from place to place.

And the measure of its value increases in proportion as it is able to do this safely, quickly, quietly, comfortably, and surely.

A car in the repair shop fails in every one of these respects, and its failure costs the owner a repair bill that makes the car just that much more of an expense to him.

And the chagrin and humiliation of it all is that the owner thereby pays an additional price to make his car do the very work, service, that he supposed he paid for in the purchase price. Little wonder, then, that repair bills and the losses they represent are the bugbear of motordom.

Little wonder, either, that car buyers want cars that will free them from repair expense burdens, annoyances, and losses.

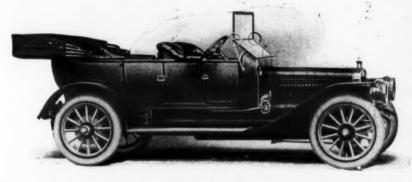
SATISFIED OWNERS

Winton Six owners know the joy of freedom from repair bills.

These sworn figures show how Winton Six owners, traveling stupendous mileage, in all parts of the country and in all seasons, during four years, were free from the repair expense bugbear, and had always at their service a car ready and able to carry its passengers from place

The Winton Co. guarantees every statement made in Winton Six advertising to be true without qualification

WINTON SIX



to place, safely, quickly, quietly, comfortably, and surely.

Winton Six owners know from experience the meaning of satisfaction

What the Winton Six has done for four years in the service of these owners it can do for you, for the Winton Six today is the same car we have been making continuously since June, 1907—four years without requiring a single radical change in design or construction.

FIFTH YEAR OF SUCCESS

In its fifth year of success, the Winton Six has a 48 H. P. self-cranking motor, ball-bearing multiple-disc clutch and fourspeed transmission, 130-inch wheel base, spacious and comfortable four-door body with operating levers inside, electric dash and tail lights, Booth Demountable rims, and 36 x 4 1-2 inch tires all around. Price \$3000. Compare it with cars costing \$5000 or more.

Let us send you our librarysize catalog, together with our Upkeep Book that gives complete data covering the cars that placed the world's lowest repair expense record at 22.8 cents per 1000 miles.

HERE ARE THE RESULTS FOR FOUR YEARS

Year	Cars	Total Mileage	Total Repair Expens	
1911 1910 1909 1908	20 10 10 10	394,333,9 165,901.9 118,503 65,087.4	\$ 20.88 6.96 127.30 15.13	
Totals	50	744,426.2	8170.27	

Average for four years -22.8 cents per 1000 miles.

REPAIR RECORDS FOR 1911

CAR OW\ER	CITY	Total Mileage	Total Repair Expense
S. J. Franklin. *Martin Daab. Mrs. Wm. E. Fox. J. W. Strackbein. F. M. Hauthaway Mrs. Anna M. Hermes *J. F. Clenny W. B. Simpson F. H. Greene Dr. A. H. Hilsman E. W. Edwards James W. Stevens A. S. Gilman E. M. Potter Chas. F. Lembke Earl B. Putnam Dr. Espy L. Smith Henry Hall	Cincinnati, O. Millylile, N. J. New York City Chicago, Ili. Gricago, Ili. Chicago, Ili. Philadelphia, Pa. Chicago, Ili. Philadelphia, Pa. Locago, Ili. Philadelphia, Pa. Locago, Ili. Philadelphia, Pa. Locago, Ili. Philadelphia, Pa. Locago, Ili. Chicago, Ili. Philadelphia, Pa. Locago, Ili. Chicago, Ili. Chicago, Ili.	27, 325 25, 290 24, 221, 4 24, 082, 6 23, 970 22, 982 21, 258 21, 133 90, 55 1 19, 084, 1 18, 986 15, 017 14, 239 14, 239 17, 386 18, 863 18,	81.20 None None None None None None None 1.25 None None None 25 None None None None None
		394,223,9	820.88

"Same car Four Years. Same car Two Years.

THE WINTON MOTOR CAR. CO.,

The World's First Makers of Sixes Exclusively, 122 Berea Road, Cleveland,—Sixth City.

NEW YORK, Broadway at 70th St. CHICAGO, Michigan Ave. at 13th St. BOSTUN, 674 Commonwealth Ave. PHILADELPHIA, 246-248 N. Broad St. BALTIMO'RE, Mt. Royal at North Ave. PITTSBURG, Baum at Beatty St.

CLEVELAND, 1228 Huron Road, DETROIT, 998 Woodward Ave. MINNEAPOLIS, 16-22 Eighth St. N. KANSAS CITY, 3324-3326 Main St. SAN FRANCISCO, 300 Van Ness Ave. SEATTLE, 1000-1006 Pike St.



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No other lands are as quaint and fascinating, no other trips are as full of comfort and health as those which have been arranged this season by the

Atlantic, Gulf & West Indies Steamship Lines

with their splendid service and modern steamships, reaching Porto Rico, Bahamas, Florida, Cuba, Texas, Old Mexico and San Domingo. You are certain to enjoy every moment of the journey.

Write for AGWI NEWS, a beautifully illustrated free magazine, full of helpful travel information, and describing the cruises of the following steamship lines:

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AGWI TOUR BUREAUS:

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CHICAGO 506 Com. Natl. Bank Bldg. 192 Washington St.

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Fred Harvey dining-car meals. On the way visit

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For art booklets of both trains address W. J. Black, Pass Traffic Mgr. A T & S.F. Ry. System 1090 Railway Exchange Gicago.

These beautiful silks offer a choice of over five hundred different patterns in printed dress silks, including many multicolor prints and border designs.

They include "Shower-Proof" Foulards, Dress Silks of all kinds, Florentines, Decorative Silks, Upholstery Goods, Velours, Velvets, Ribbons, Spun Silk Yarns, Reeled Silks, etc., etc.

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Can be safely carried in any position. New idea cap locks pen when not in use. All pure rubber and 14 kt. pens.

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ORIGINAL-GENUINE

Delicious, Invigorating

The Food-Drink for all ages. Better than Tea or Coffee.

Rich milk and malted-grain extract, in powder. A quick lunch. Keep it on your sideboard at home.

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ISSUED YEARLY — SENT FOR 15 CENTS IN STAMPS.
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Use Throughout the World for General Pla The Most Durable 25 Cent Card Made. Club Indexes - Air-Cushion or Ivory Finish.





For Liquor and Drug Users

A scientific remedy that has cured nearly half a million in the past thirty-two years. Administered by medical specialists at Keeley Institutes only. Write for particulars

To the Following Keeley Institutes:

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rd, Ky.

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YOU Can Rise to a Position of Power

To hold a position of power you need to know more about your particular business than the men working beside you.

The secret of power and success is to KNOW EVERY-THING ABOUT SOMETHING.

Right along these lines the International Correspondence Schools train men for Positions of Power.

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Explain, without further obligation on my part, how
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Civil Service
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Architect
Architect
Languages
Commercial Eaglish
Building Contractor
And Assert Drateman
And Assert Drateman
Commercial Hustrading
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Tired Out!

T sometimes happens that a woman, on the death of her husband, is left without any means of support. Her duties have not fitted her to meet the problems of making a living for herself and her children, and she has to fall back upon her skill with a needle, Such skill is so poorly paid that poverty and privation stare her in the face.

No man has any excuse for subjecting his wife to such a future. Whatever he earns, a part of it should be used to guarantee her against it.

The Travelers Insurance Company in its Guaranteed Low Cost Monthly Income Policy has the best safeguard ever devised for just this emergency.



The Travelers Insurance Company

HARTFORD, CONN.

Please send me particulars regarding Guaranteed Low Cost Monthly Income Policy.

Name Business Address



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THE investor desiring to place his funds in bonds bearing the maximum interest with safety and convertibility, is confronted with one question. To whom shall he go to make his investment?

Naturally, he should turn to an Investment Banking House whose experience, ability and business methods stand pre-eminent. The utmost care in choosing the house from which one intends to purchase, is just as important as selecting the investment itself.

S. W. STRAUS & CO. was organized in 1882, since which time we have gained an experience of inestimable value to our clients. In these thirty years no client of ours has ever lost one single dollar of principal or interest on any investment purchased of us.

It is and always has been our custom to repurchase, when requested, securities bought from us at par and accrued interest, less a handling charge of One Per Cent, thus making them readily convertible into cash.

If you are genuinely interested in a type of security which has stood the test of thirty years' exacting investment experience, write for "The Investor's Magazine" which we publish twice a month in the interest of conservative investors.

We would be pleased to submit a list of very choice bonds based on the highest class of centrally-located, improved, income-producing Chicago real estate.

Netting the investor 6% Write for Circular No. F.9 (64)

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STRAUS BUILDING, CHICAGO.



Since the decision rendered by the United States Supreme Court, it has been decided by the Monks hereafter to bottle

CHARTREUSE

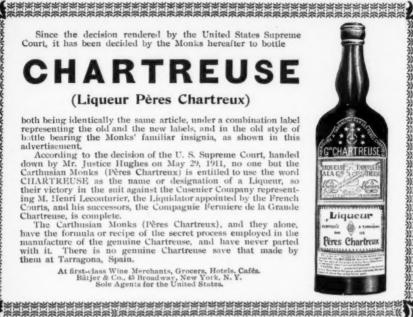
(Liqueur Pères Chartreux)

both being identically the same article, under a combination label representing the old and the new labels, and in the old style of bottle bearing the Monks' familiar insignia, as shown in this advertisement.

According to the decision of the U. S. Supreme Court, handed down by Mr. Justice Hughes on May 29, 1911, no one but the Carthusian Monks (Pères Chartreux) is entitled to use the word CHARTREUSE as the name or designation of a Liqueur, so their victory in the suit against the Cusenier Company representing M. Henri Lecouturier, the Liquidator appointed by the French Courts, and his successors, the Compagnie Fermiere de la Grande Chartreuse, is complete.

The Carthusian Monks (Pères Chartreux), and they alone, have the formula or recipe of the secret process employed in the manufacture of the genuine Chartrense, and have never parted with it. There is no genuine Chartrense save that made by them at Tarragona, Spain.

At first-class Wine Merchants, Grocers, Hotels. Cafés. Bätjer & Co., 45 Broadway, New York, N. Y. Sole Agents for the United States.





The YALE for 1912

Has ALL the Features that Show Real Advancement Over 1911.

Keep these 1912 YALE points in mind; they mark the great progress that has been made in comparison with 1911 motorcycles.

YOU MUST DEMAND A YALE TO GET THEM ALL.

2% in. Studded Tires; Eclipse Free Engine Clutch, with positive lever control; new full high Forks and Triple Anchored Handlebars; longest stroke motor yet made; dual oiling systems; per-fected Double Grip Cputrol and Wide Mud Guards.

Yale Motorcycles Hold the World's Records for Endurance.

Write today for full information about these real 1912 motorcycles: Model 24, 4 H. P.; Model 24M, 4 H. P., with Bosch Magneto; Model 25, 5 H. P. Twin; Model 27, 7 H. P. Twin.

THE CONSOLIDATED MFG. CO. 1719 Fernwood Ave., Toledo, Ohio





A KODAK HOME PORTRAIT.

Picture taking is simpler than you think—if you do it the

Kodak Way

And there's no more delightful side to photography than the making of home portraits. Get the full pleasure that is to be had from your Kodak by taking in-door pictures in winter as well as out-door pictures in summer.

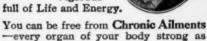
To make every step perfectly clear we have issued a beautifully illustrated little book—At Home with the Kodak—that tells in a very understandable way just how to proceed. It may be had free at your dealers or by mail direct, upon request.

EASTMAN KODAK CO., ROCHESTER, N. Y., The Kodak City,

You Can Weigh Exactly what You Should Weigh

You can be Strong— Vigorous—

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You can have a Good Figure—as good as any woman.

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I no longer need to say what "I can do" but what "I HAVE DONE." I have helped 49,000 of the most cultured, intelligent women of America to arise to their very best—why not your

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What My Pupils Say:

Every one notices the change in my complexion, it has lost that yellow color."

"Just think what you have done for me! Last your I weighed 216 pounds, this year 146, and have not gained an onnoe back. I am not wrinkled ofther. I feel so young and strong, no *harmatism, or singgish liver, and I can brathe how. It is surprising how easily I did it. I feel to years younger."

"Just think! I have not had a pill or a cathartic since I began and I used to take one every night."

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I don't know what indigestion is any more, and my nerves are so rested!
I sleep like a baby."

"Miss Cocroft, I have taken off my plasses and my catarrk is so much better. Isn't that good?"

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Reports like these come to me every day. Do you wonder I want to help every woman to vibrant health and happiness. Write me your faults of health or figure. Your correspondence is hold in strict confidence. If I cannot help you I will tell you what will.

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AGENTS — DROP DEAD ONES, AWAKE! Grab this new invention. Low priced, waterpower home massage machine. Marcical, marvelous, nysterious. New field. Big profits, Sold on money back guarantee. "Margwarth sol+5 in 10 minutes; 31 in 2 days." "Parker sells 8 first day." Yaughn "your machine has merit. Express 6 dozen." Free information. Blackstone Co., 311 Meredith, Toledo, O.

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THE membership of the International Automobile League over 52,000. This means that that number of automobile owners are saving from 20 to 65 per cent on the cost of mulutaing their cars. For information write International Automobile League, Buffalo, N. Y.

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THE DEAF HEAR INSTANTLY with the Acousticon. For personal use; also for churches and theatres. Special instruments. You must hear before you purchase. Booklet free, General Acoustic Company, 205 Beaufort C

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\$100 Monthly and expenses to men and women to travel and distribute samples; big manufacturer. Steady work. S. Scheffer, Treas, MY, Chicago

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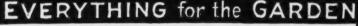
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Seeds, Etc.

A REMARKABLE OFFER of Henderson's seeds: Ponderosa Tomato, Scarlet Globe Radish, Big Bostow Lettuce, Invincible Asters, Batterfly Pansies, Spencer Sweet Pens. On receipt of 10c. to cover postage, etc., we will mail our Henderson collection consisting of one packet of each of above varieties all enclosed in a compon envelope, which will be accepted as 25c, on any order of \$1.00 or over. In addition we will mail our 1912 catalogue "Everything for the Garden," the biggest and best we have ever issued. Peter Henderson & Company, 35 & 37 Cortlands St., New York City.



is the title of **our 1912 catalogue**—the most beautiful and complete horticultural publication of the day—really a book of **204 pages, 5 colored plates and over 800 photo engravings**, showing actual results without exaggeration. It is a mine of information of everything in Gardening either for pleasure or profit and embodies the results of over sixty-two years of practical experience.

To give this catalogue the largest possible distribution we make the following liberal offer:

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To everyone who will state where this advertisement was seen and who encloses Ten Cents we will mail the catalogue

And also Send Free of Charge

Our Famous 50 Cent "HENDERSON" COLLECTION OF SEEDS containing one packet each of Ponderosa Tomato, Big Boston Lettuce, Scarlet Globe Radish, Henderson's Invincible Asters, Mammoth Butterfly Pansies and Glant Spencer Sweet Peas, in a coupon envelope which, when emptied and returned, will be accepted as a 25-cent cash payment on any order amounting to \$1.00 and upward.

In addition, all ordering from this advertisement will receive a copy of our new Cardon Cuido and Record. This is a hand book of general garden information, planting tables, cooking receipts, cultural directions, etc., etc., and in all is one of the most necessary and valuable of our many publications.

ER HENDERSON & CO. 35 & 37 CORTLANDT ST

Tells how and "Why" you can secure powerful lungs, a broad chest, a strong neck, an arm of steel and broad shoulders. It tells you why two kinds of strength must be developed before you can be really healthy and strong. You must develop functional strength (strength of heart, lungs and vital organs) as well as muscular strength. It tells of the most successful way to take abuseled a varerise. physical exercise.

To cover cost of mailing send four cents.

PROF. H. W. TITUS,

"The strongest man in the world of his weight"

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NEW YORK CITY



Winter, Women and Beauty

Wind and cold touch only to enhance the loveliness guarded by LABLACHE. It freshens the skin, softening away the

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Refuse substitutes. They may be dangerous. Flesh, White, Pink or Cream. 50c. a box of druggists or by mail. Send 10c. for a sample box.

BEN. LEVY CO. French Perfumers. Dept. 40, 135 Kingston St., Boston, Mass

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SONG-WRITERS, Composers. Send SONG-WRITERS, Composers, Send Me your work. Good Songs always in demand. New York is the Only place to publish songs properly. Write for offer. Micrisch, 1547 B'way. N. Y.

BIG MONEY WRITING SONGS. Thousands of dollars for anyone who can write successful words or music. Past experience unnecessary. Send us your song poems, with or without music, or write for free particulars. Acceptance Guaranteed If Available. Washington only place to secure copyright. H. Kirkus Dugdale Co., Dept. 256, Washington, D. C.

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ANY woman can make money in the Poultry Business under Greider's advice; his 200-pp, book tells everything over 100 illustrations, many colored. Only 15c.—money back if not satisfied. B. H. Greider, Box 86, Rheems, Pa.

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\$7.75 PAID for rare date 1853 quarters; \$20 for a \$\frac{1}{2}\text{.} Keep all money dated before 1880, and send 10 cents at once for new illustrated Coin Value Book, 4x7. It may mean your fortune, C.F. Clarke Co., Dept. 49, Le Roy, N.Y.

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MOTION Picture Plays Wanted. You can write them. We teach you by mail. No experience needed. Big demand and good pay. Details free. Associated Motion Picture Schools, \$48 Sheridan Rd., Chicago.

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FINE Farming Opportunity in Louisians, 60 miles from New Orleans on L.C. R. R. Temperate climate, good markets, splendid stock country \$20 per acre. Terms reasonable. Address, C. H. Mc Nie, Keltwood, La.

CALIFORNIA'S Santa Clara Valley, CALIFORNIA'S Santa Clara Valley, known as "the poor man's paradise," surrounds Sunnyvale, the manufac-turing suburb of San Francisco. Ideal climate. Best soil for fruit, truck gaz-dening, chicken ranching and diversi-fied farming. Ample water. 50 page illustrated book, mailed free. Address Sunnyvale Chamber of Commerce, 30 Crossman Bidg., Sunnyvale, Cal.

Miscellaneous

MANY MAKE MONEY with Sure man i man i

A TYPICAL

Mellin's Food Boy



Son of I. Mariner Thompson, M.D.

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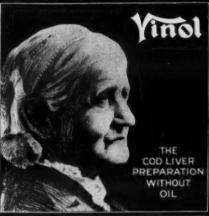


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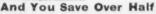
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For red, rough, chapped and bleeding hands, itching, burning palms, and painful fingerends, with shapeless nails, a one-night Cuticura treatment works wonders. Directions: Soak the hands, on retiring, in hot water and Cuticura Soap. Dry, anoint with Cuticura Ointment, and wear soft bandages or old, loose gloves during the night.



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"You'd never think I stained my hair after I use Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain. The Stain doesn't hurt the hair as dyes do.

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It only takes you a few minutes once a month to apply It only takes you a few minutes once a month to apply Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain with your comb. Stains only the hair, doesn't rub off, it is free from lead, sulphur, silver and all metallife compounds. Has no odor, no sediment, no grease. One bottle of Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain should last you a year. Sells for \$1.00 per bottle at first-class druggists. We guarantee satisfaction. Send your name and address, and enclose 25 cents (stamps or coin) and we will mail you, charges prepaid, a trial package, in plain sealed wrapper, with valuable booklet on hair. Mrs. Fotter's Hygienic Supply Co., 185 Groton Bidg., Cincinnati, Ohlo.



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JULIUS SCHMID, ASTORIA, NEW YORK CITY



HEARS CHURCH BELLS AFTER LONG DEAFNESS

For the first time in years, this good lady, who has been deaf, hears the church bells. She is in ecatasy. Only this morning has she been able to hear the prattle of her grandchildren and the voice of her daughter. Twenty-three years ago she first found herself becoming deaf and, despite numerous remedies, medical advice, hearing devices and specialists' treatments, she found it more and more difficult to hear. Of late years she was harassed by peculiar noises in the head, which added to her misery. At last she was told of a book which explains how to regain perfect hearing without costly apparatus or drugs. She got this book and learned how to quickly become freed from deafness and head-noises. Observe her delight in this hypothetical illustration! Any reader of this publication who desires to obtain one of these books can do so free of cost by merely writing to the author, Dr. George E. Coutant, 29 B. Station E. New York, N. Y. He will be pleased to mail it promptly, postpaid, to anyone whose hearing is not good. This offer will bring joy to many homes.

Two Dangerous Ways to Treat Corns

Paring a corn is a dangerous form of home

A slip of the blade-a slight penetrationmay mean a very stubborn infection.

And it forms but a one-week makeshift. It means simply removing the top of the corn, and that for a few days only.

D

Another dangerous thing is to treat a corn with a harmful and spreading medica-

The only right way to deal with a corn is with the famous Blue-jay plaster.

Fifty million corns have been taken out by it. No other invention is one-tenth so popular.

The plaster is applied in a jiffy. The pain instantly ends.

Then the B & B wax gently acts on the corn. In two days the corn comes out.

No pain, no inconvenience, no discomfort whatever. And in 48 hours the whole corn is eradicated.

We have proved that, remember, to millions of people, on fifty million corns.

They don't dabble with corns. They don't risk the knife treatment. They don't suffer and wait.

They stop the pain, then forget it, until the whole corn, root and branch, is eliminated.

All because of this B & B wax-our invention-inside of the circle of felt.

For your own sake we urge you to try it.

A in the picture is the soft B & B wax. It loosens the corn.

B protects the corn, stopping the pain at once.
C wraps around the toe. It is narrowed to be comfortable.

D is rubber adhesive to tasten the plaster on.

Sample Mailed Free. Also Blue-jay Bunion Plasters. Sold by Druggists.

Bauer & Black, Chicago and New York, Makers of Surgical Dressings, etc.



"Can take a pound a day off a patient or put it on. Other systems may temperarily silevisie, but this is sure and permanent."
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Druggists sell Delatone, or an original one-ounce jar will be mailed to any address upon receipt of One Dollar by

The Sheffield Pharmacal Company 3255 Sheffield Avenue — Dept. T — Chicago

Raising a Roof for a Rainy Day

By FRANKLIN O. KING

"Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall," said Longfellow, and I believe You will agree with Me, Mr. Reader, that it is a Wise Man who Knows enough to Come in out of the Wet. If You haven't the Prudence and Foresight to take advantage of Good Weather and Raise a Roof for Your Family that will Protect them when the Storms come, it will be Up to Them to Find Shelter where Best They may. The wisdom of "Laying By Something For a Rainy Day," was never Better Exemplified than it is at Present, and if that Something is properly Invested in an Income-Producing Farm Home in Gulf Coast Texas, Your Children some Day Will Rise up and Call you Blessed.

How much Better off are You than Last Year, or the Year before that? How Much have You Actually Got that You could call Your Own? A little Furniture? Piano, perhaps? A Few Dollars in the Bank? And how many Weary Years has it taken You to get Together that little Mite? Don't You see how Hopeless It is? You come Home each Night a little more Tired, and Your good Wife can see the gray coming into Your Hair-if It isn't already There. Chances for Promotion grow Less and Less, as each Year is added, but Ever and Always Your Expenses seem to Grow.

The Systematic Saver Accumulates slowly, un-

less His Savings are Put to Work where They can Earn Something Worth While. Fifteen Hundred Dollars put into the Savings Bank will, in One Year, at 3 per cent earn You less than Fifty Dollars. Half of Fifteen Hundred Dollars invested in One of our Ten-Acre Danbury Colony Farms, in convenient Monthly Payments (Protected by Sickness and Insurance Clauses) will Earn Freedom from Care, and that Comfort which comes from the Ability to Sit under One's "Own Vine and Fig Tree," with a certain Income Insured.

The Best Incentive to Persistent and Systematic Saving is the Desire to Get a Home. The Best Place I Know of to Get a Home is in the Rain Belt of Gulf Coast Texas, where You can Grow Three Big Money-Making Crops a Year, on the Same Soil, and where Irrigation and Fertilization do not Eat up the Profits Your Hands Create.

If every Man who reads this Article would

Take the Time to THINK, and the Trouble to INVESTIGATE, every Acre of our Danbury Colony Land Would be Sold Within the Next Three Months. If Every Woman who glances through this Advertisement but Knew the Plain Truth about our Part of Texas, You couldn't Keep Her away from There with a Shot-Gun, because the Woman is Primarily a Home-Seeker and a Home-Maker, and the Future of Her Children is the Great Proposition that is Uppermost in Her Mind and Heart.

Do You Know that Growers of Figs, Strawberries and Early Vegetables clear a Net Profit of \$300 to \$500 an Acre in Gulf Coast Texas? Do You Know men have realized more than \$1,000 an acre Growing Oranges in Our Country? If You Do Not know these things, you should read up on the subject, and you must not fail to get our Free Book, which contains nearly 100 photographs of growing Crops, etc.

What would You think of a little Town of about

1.200 People situated near our Lands, where they ship on an average of \$400,000 worth of Fruit, Vegetables, Poultry, Eggs, etc., a year? During 1910 this Community shipped nearly \$100,000 worth of Strawberries alone.

We are situated within convenient shipping dis-tance to Three Good Railroads, and in addition to this we have the inestimable Advantages of Water Transportation through the Splendid Harbors of Galveston. and Velasco, so that our Freight Rates are Cut Practically in Half. The is Extremely Climate Healthful and Superior to that of California or Florida-Winter and Summer-owing to the



The Man With the Hoe-and the Bank Account.

Constant Gulf Breeze. Our Contract Embodies Life and Accident Insurance, and should You die, or become totally Your Family, or anyone else You name, will get the Farm without the Payment of another Penny. If you should be Dissatisfied, we will Absolutely Refund Your Money, as per the Terms of our Guarantee.

Write for our Free Book. Fill Out the Blank Space below with Your Name and Address, plainly written, and mail it to the Texas-Gulf Realty Company, 1355 Peoples Gas Building, Chicago, Illinois. Read it carefully, and then use Your Own Good Judgment.

Please send me your book "Independence With Ten Acres.'

February issue, Ainslee's Magazine.

The Greatest Florida Book EVER WRITTEN—Yours for the Asking

If you want to know just why thousands upon thousands are flocking to Florida -if you want to know just what has turned the tide of capital and labor to this state-if you want to know ALL about Florida and the great Ocala Palatka Colony,

where for 17 cents a day you may own a farm home worth \$5,000 a year-write today-now-for this great book, "Ten Acres and Freedom"-the greatest piece of

> literature written about Florida.



It tells you (and furnishes the proof directly from this great colony) of the this great colony) of the enormous profits of a single acre of this land which is startling the whole world. The fact



CHARLES H. SIEG

whole world. The fact The Pioneer Florida Small Farm Man stories" it gives you about the wonderful climate and rainfall of the limitless opportunites will assonish the wonderful climate and rainfall of the limitless opportunites will assonish the class for your to make your home. you-convince you at once that here is the place for you to make your home,

This great book tells all about Charles H. Sieg, the man who is directly responsible for this great Florida land rush. It tells all about his great colony and its hundreds of model little truck and fruit farms—how the people here are becoming wealthy and independent—just as you can do, it gives actual photos of their farms and homes. And, besides, these people tell you in their own words just how they have succeeded—the most interesting and inspiring stories you have ever read.

In this great book, you will also learn all about how these new settlers carried away 10 first premiums on their products at the Marion County fair. It explains about the vast amount of money that is being expended in developing and building up this colony—it tells about the new million dollar railroad which runs directly through these colony farms.

Here in the great Ocala Palatta colony, you have the finest of roads— unequaled rail and water transportation—a most delightful climate, schools, churches, daily appers, rural mail routes. local and long distance phones—just an ideal community with the charm of the pleasure resort closely bound with the ability to earn an independent living as long as you live.

A thousand families are here on their colony farms now-five new towns have been established—merchants with well stocked stores are here—everywhere you see cozy bungalows, everywhere you see growing fields.

Learn the truth about Frorida-learn of the opportunities here for YOU. Sign, detach and mail coupon at once.

-- AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE FREE FLORIDA BOOK COUPON--NEW SOUTH FARM & HOME COMPANY, 671 Duval Hotel Bldg., Jacksonville, Florida.

Please send me your big free book "Ten Acres and Freedom" and proofs, actual photographs and other literature describing your corony farms in the proven districts of Marion and Putnam countes, Florida. I do not bind myself to buy, but will gladly read your free literature.

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The Evolution of a Ten Acre Colony Farm

These are not pen pictures—but actual every day scenea. The first and second are the same day in Michigan and Florida—March 10th, 1910. The next—a colonist's coay bungalow.—Esting oranges fresh from the trees—prize potatoes raised by a colonist. Look well into these pictures—certainly here is the charm of the pleasure resort closely bound with the ability to earn an independent living.



From a Photograph Showing the Last Step in Locating the Exact Center of Population of the United States.

"The Center of Population"

A Title that Fits Every Bell Telephone

From the census of 1910 it is found that the center of population is in Bloomington, Indiana, latitude 39 degrees 10 minutes 12 seconds north, and longitude 86 degrees 32 minutes 20 seconds west.

"If all the people in the United States were to be assembled in one place, the center of population would be the point which they could reach with the minimum aggregate travel, assuming that they all traveled in direct lines from their residence to the meeting place."

-U. S. Census Bulletin.

This description gives a word picture of every telephone in the Bell system.

Every Bell telephone is the center of the system,

It is the point which can be reached with "the minimum aggregate travel," by all the people living within the range of telephone transmission and having access to Bell telephones.

Wherever it may be on the map, each Bell telephone is a center for purposes of intercommunication.

To make each telephone the center of communication for the largest number of people, there must be One System, One Policy and Universal Service for a country of more than ninety million.

AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

One Policy

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Universal Service



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A Fairy Soap Bath Costs ½ of a Cent

There are twenty-five delightful, satisfying baths in a 5c cake of Fairy Soap—therefore, it's economical. Fairy Soap has no dyes, coloring matter or high perfumes to deceive the eye or delude the nostrils. It is just as pure as it looks because it is made from high-grade edible products. We couldn't make a better soap at any price than we offer you in this handy, floating, oval cake of Fairy at 5c.

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